MONSTER HOTEL

*Krishna consciousness**

*or how I learned to stop worrying and love the new world order

by

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Preface

This book came about as a compilation of select blog posts from 2008-2013.

The focus of the book is on the true nature of reality; how Krishna consciousness (being conscious of Krishna, and his teachings) reveals the true meaning of the "New World Order," i.e. someone who experiences true enlightenment will understand and see that there truly is a long-time conspiracy running the world---although what that conspiracy really is seems to elude most people, who usually miss the forest for the trees. For example, consider that while watching a movie about a conspiracy, that you start to believe that what you see is real and not a movie, when in reality the actual controller of what you're seeing is due to a conspiracy by the director of the movie. Reality is just like that, there is a controlling conspiracy, it's just not what most people think it is.

I also discuss many other idiosyncratic views and ideologies taught by Swami Prabhupada and ISKCON in the name of the Chaitanya Vaishnava bhakti-yoga tradition, and contrast them with my own understanding based on my years of living as a yogi in various ashrams and studying from various gurus, as well as from my long time study of many ancient and medieval yogic texts.

ISKCON proper, as well as the much larger ex-membership, the congregation, and followers, I sometimes call ISKCONISTAN. It's for convenience sake to distinguish succinctly that community of believers from other Hare Krishna communities, many of whom don't believe in or teach the same ideology as Swami Prabhupada and his devoted followers.

At the end there' s an Addendum which is linked to throughout the book. It can be used as a reference when need be. It's a compilation of what's euphemistically called "Srila Prabhupada's controversial statements" by the leadership in the ISKCON community.

There are also three Appendixes at the end, two of them are on free will according to Vedanta and my version of common sense science; the third has

links to a few recent well done research papers on the roles of women in ancient Indian or Vedic culture. One is more general, the other is on a more specific topic about women in spiritual leadership roles, e.g. as gurus.

Vraja D

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Introduction

ISKCON, or the *International Society for Krishna Consciousness*, better known to the public as “The Hare Krishnas,” was the first organization to teach *Bhakti Yoga* on a large scale outside India. ISKCON is a branch of the Gaudiya, or Chaitanya Vaishnava sampradaya—a tradition based yogic religion native to India, connected to the older Brahma-Madhva sampradaya, teaching a variant of *Vaishnava Vedanta* – the largest following being in the north-east states of Bengal and Orissa where the sect began in the 16th century. ISKCON was started in New York City in 1966 by a 69 year old Indian swami named A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. He is usually referred to by his followers as “Srila Prabhupada.” He was and is seen by his followers as a divine being sent by God from heaven to enlighten the world. He taught his followers – and they believe – that he and his teachings have been empowered by God to take over the world.

While ISKCON has around 5,000 to 20,000 full time members or monks (married and unmarried), they have hundreds of temples and ashrams around the world with many large temple complexes in India. It’s difficult to estimate the number of full-time members. Many of the members are either in India or Eastern Europe (including ex-Soviet states), and many stay for a while then leave, then come back, going back and forth. There is no census or reporting society wide on membership, therefore estimating is going to be difficult. The congregation numbers are probably in the millions, although they’re mostly Indians (probably 95%) both in India and around the world. There are many more non-Indians who rarely visit temples but still consider themselves believers and followers to some degree.

Therefore there are millions of people around the world, especially in India, who consider themselves to be disciples of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. Indeed ISKCON has become one of the most influential religious organizations in India today. They have strong and wide support among the elites of Hindu society all over the world, and have been the most popular “Hindu church” for the Hindu

diaspora for 40 years. Most temples in North America and other countries with large Indian communities, serve mainly the Indian Hindu community and are commonly run by Indians — which is contrary to the image of the Hare Krishnas in most people's minds, who see them as a cult of western converts to Hinduism. While the organization started out like that, over time there was a shift in membership and focus as the Indian diaspora embraced ISKCON as their own. This was mostly due to ISKCON being the only purveyor of popular Hinduism (bhakti) outside India, and therefore "the only game in town" if you wanted to expose your children to the temple culture of popular Hinduism. ISKCON became and still is an important part of the lives of a large percentage of the Indian Hindu diaspora, not only for religious and cultural reasons, but also for social connectivity.

Partially because of their success with the Hindu community around the world, they were able to gain the trust of the upper classes and elites of Hindu society in India, and have become accepted as an authentic Hindu religious organization — still the only imported Hindu religious organization to do that, although it's imported only in the sense that the organization started outside India, while the religion itself did not, except for it's unique view of the founder of ISKCON, as well as several other idiosyncrasies — all explored in this book.

Having their roots in India helped to gain ISKCON respect as authentic among Hindus, but at first the all western membership was just a source of curiosity and amusement, they were not taken seriously by most people — rumors became widely spread that ISKCON was a CIA front. But that quickly changed as the Indian diaspora is very influential in India — especially the Indian political and corporate class, who along with their families had adopted ISKCON as their home away from home.

Today ISKCON is a major religious institution in India, with wide support and patronage, with many large architecturally impressive temple complexes and ashrams which are among the most popular in India. They are currently building their most impressive temple to date in West Bengal, not too far from Kolkata — when completed it will rival any church in the world in scale and beauty, see it at Temple of the Vedic Planetarium

ISKCON is not the only Hare Krishna organization in the world. The religion started in India in the 16th century and has many millions of followers in India,

most are not affiliated with any organization. After A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami died in 1977 other elderly swamis from the same religion began to leave India to teach. Also several Prabhupada's disciples left ISKCON to teach as gurus. They have established several other Hare Krishna organizations with many temples, ashrams, and followers around the world. They have gained most of their full time membership from ex-members of ISKCON. The other swamis don't present exactly the same teachings as A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami.

A "Hindu" named Bud wrote to me:

> ISKCON is NOT part of mainstream Hinduism, not by a long-shot. You can read what Prabhupada himself said at this article from Hinduism Today.

First off, ironically, besides Bud being an American convert to a Shiva worshiping sect, and besides the fact that the article he links to is a propaganda piece by a Hindu sect competing with ISKCON for followers outside India; the truth is that *Hinduism Today* is published by a small offshoot Shaivite Sect (headquartered in Hawaii), which was started by an American convert to a devotional Shaivite sect in South India—his current bio on Wikipedia is admittingly a copy of something published by the sect, building him up way beyond reality. In no way is he, or his sect, a big player in the Hindu world. They're a very tiny organization with only two ashrams. At their world headquarters in Hawaii they have 20 members. Practically everything you can read about them online (not only Wikipedia) is from their public relations office, designed to make them appear as if they're big and have a lot of influence. Surprisingly some people buy into it without checking them out closely. They give a list of operating three temples, although two of them are on the same property in Hawaii, one being the old temple. They are first and foremost a publishing house and salesmen, making money from selling all things related to Hinduism---art, music, books, deities, to theological and yoga courses. I'm not saying this to diminish them, but originally the magazine was called *The New Saivite World*, which was exactly like Prabhupada's *Back to Godhead* for that sect. Calling it *Hinduism Today* shouldn't mislead anyone into thinking it's some big Hindu news agency, or any size news agency. Nope, just a small religious sect trying to make a living, mostly by scouring Google news or other search engines for keywords like Hindu or Hinduism and then posting the articles they find on their magazine.

Anyway, I think Prabhupada was right in what was quoted from him in that article, i.e. his saying Hinduism is a “so-called” religion. And “ISKCON isn’t teaching the Hindu religion.” The word “so-called” means: “to be falsely or improperly named.” The word “Hinduism” doesn’t refer to a religion, it refers to a culture where people follow some sort of related religious faith. But there is no religion named Hinduism, it’s a blanket term referring to the mass of religions in India which over time became understood by most non-Hindus to refer to an actual religious faith. The word Hinduism derives from the word Hindustan (and the word Hindu), which itself came from Persians who used it to refer to the land (the Persian -*stan*=land, derived from Sanskrit *sthana*) around the Sindhu River. Sindhu is a Sanskrit word for “river.” So in one sense the Sindhu River means River River. In the early Vedic period we find Sindhu used both for a specific river (Indus) and as a general term for river. Later in the Vedas it’s used only to refer to the Indus. The Indus River (with the now dried up Saraswati) was the early center of Vedic India, i.e. the “Harappan civilization.”

The word Hindustan was used by Persians to refer to “the land of the people near the Sindhu (Indus) River.” The word Hindustani and Hindu came to refer to the people in India as most of India was conquered by Islamic invaders. Later, when the British came to Hindustan they coined the word Hinduism to refer to the religion of the Hindustanis or Hindus—outside of the Muslim, and later outside the Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist faiths.

So there you have it. Hinduism never referred to a specific religious ideology, it broadly means “the religion of the people of India.” In essence there is no religion or religious philosophy literally called Hinduism. There are numerous religions which are related in various ways in the Indian subcontinent, e.g. Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Advaita Vedanta, Shaktism, etc. There are more, and within each religion there are countless denominations or permutations. Originally the Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs were included as part of Hinduism by the Europeans. But those sects demanded to be excluded and recognized as separate religions, and eventually they were, even though they are no different than any of the other Hindu religions in being distinct belief systems yet sharing many similarities in rituals, philosophy, and cultural identifiers. Scholars sometimes use the term *Dharmic religion* to refer to the religions of

India which used to be all lumped together as Hinduism due to a similarity in their beliefs, e.g. dharma, reincarnation and samsara, karma, etc. That close relationship came to be because they percolated in an insular landscape (due to the natural physical barriers surrounding India). *None* of the traditional religions from Hindustan (or Bharat-varsha, the ancient name of India) refer to themselves as “Hinduism” or “The Hindu religion.”

What Prabhupada was trying to do was educate non-Hindus on what Hinduism is, i.e. a so-called or falsely labeled religion—simply because there is no religion which identifies itself solely as “Hinduism.” And he also stressed the idea of a Vedic self-identification over a Hindu one. Can’t fault him there, he wasn’t and still isn’t the only guru in India to make such claims. Making claims of distancing oneself from practicing Hinduism and being a Hindu, simultaneously connecting yourself to Vedic religion and Sanatana-Dharma, is a tactic to promote yourself as more traditional, and therefore more authentic.

In fact ISKCON isn’t any less, and I would argue in fact more Hindu than most Hindus. That’s simply because most Hindus aren’t as religious as the ISKCON community. I would venture that in the ISKCON community at least 95% of them are strict vegetarians (although some may eat non-vegetarian ingredients in some foods some times, e.g. cheese curdled with rennet, etc). In India less than 40% of Hindus are vegetarian (around 380 million veggies in India, with around 980 million Hindus), and a lot of them aren’t nearly as strict as the ISKCON community. Most ISKCON community members also engage in religious practices more often than most Hindus. The life of an ISKCON member is more often than not very heavily influenced by their religious beliefs and practices, and they’re often very socially involved in their insular religious community. Most Hindu’s lives aren’t so religious minded. Most Hindus are weekend Hindus, if that. Just like most Christians are weekend Christians if that. ISKCON is a religious community, most Hindus aren’t so serious about religion, that’s as should be expected because ISKCON is specifically a proselytizing religious organization, therefore it asks so much more from their community than the religious communities of most Hindus who don’t proselytize.

As far as being mainstream in Hinduism or not, I guess that would depend on your definition of being mainstream. By its normal meaning ISKCON is

definitely mainstream in the Hindu world. Since the 1960s ISKCON has been by far the most used Hindu organization patronized by Indians outside India. It's probably difficult to find an Indian national or ethnic Indian Hindu living outside India who hasn't frequented ISKCON temples or festivals.

As far as mainstream in India, it really depends on your definition of mainstream in a land with such a dichotomy between city life and village life. The lifestyles between villagers and city folk can be drastically different, especially the different experiences in terms of exposure to a wide variety of things going on in the rest of India via newspapers, TV, radio, schools, or the Internet. A lot of Indians are very poor and have little to no access to much information of life outside the village, or even in the cities the very poor (which is a big percentage) often either don't go to school or dropout young, and live a life of work with little in the way of information getting to them about life all over India. Still, most adults in cities will probably have heard of ISKCON, or will, since they are in the press a lot and have prominent temples and festivals in cities all over India. In some places they are the dominant religious organization and presence, for example in Manipur, where Gaudiya Vaishnavism was dominant before ISKCON existed.

It's a simple fact that ISKCON gets more press than any other religious organization from major newspapers (online and print) during major India-wide religious festivals. During those times simply go online and check the news for Janmashtami, Holi, etc. You will see that most Indian news sources mention festivities going on at the local ISKCON temple with only two or three other places getting mentioned. They're the only religious organization in India that gets that press India-wide. The same goes for India travel sites, they're the only religious organization that gets so many of their temples mentioned as tourist destinations by practically all Indian travel websites. Their temples are also very popular all over India, they're renown for their big beautiful temple complexes, their high standard of archana (deity worship), their cleanliness, and their high quality prashadam (sanctified food). Some of their temples are the most visited in India—even in Vrindavan, the center of Krishna worship in India, the most popular temple is the ISKCON Krishna-Balarama Temple.

Bud also said:

> The fact that ISKCON Goswamis are referred to as "Spiritual Masters" is a

> red flag for we Hindus.

That isn't correct. In ISKCON a Goswami is a sannyasin who used to be married. A Swami is a sannyasin who was never married. They make this distinction in some Indian religions because a sannyasin is often treated like a priest confessor for many Hindus, i.e. they go to them with their marriage or family problems seeking answers. If you go to sannyasins with familial problems it's probably better to seek spiritual advice from one who's experienced with family life.

Anyone, regardless of their ashrama (brahmachari, grihasta, sannyasin, vanaprastha) can be ordained as a guru or spiritual master in ISKCON. That title specifically allows them to initiate people with various types of diksha. That title doesn't give the gurus in ISKCON independent power within the organization. That power resides with the commissioners (GBC). The gurus do in fact tend to have more power than the GBC due to the fact of the devotion of their diksha disciples towards their gurus, e.g. giving them money, land, and buildings. As in any religion, the people with the most wealth tend to have the most power or influence. Guru worship was heavily promoted by Prabhupada as an essential part of bhakti-yoga, as is common in many Hindu sects.

I don't understand what you mean by the phrase "spiritual master" being a "red flag." Swami means master in English (and other words). The phrase "spiritual master" wasn't invented by ISKCON or Prabhupada, it had been commonly used for a long time to refer to a guru from India. In India it's also commonly used. I've never heard of anyone objecting to its usage.

Bud also said:

> I have nothing against ISKCON. What I would like to see is ISKCON finally step up to the plate and tell the truth which is that ISKCON is it's own religion and not part of Hinduism.

If you go to any ISKCON website and call them Hindus you will get a bunch of responses denying they are Hindu. I don't think you understand the ISKCON view on this topic. Sometimes members may refer to themselves as members of the Hindu community, or as a Hindu organization, just for expediencies sake (only because they don't feel like pointing out the different semantic problems with the word Hindu or Hinduism.) They are in fact Hindus and part of the

Hindu community, due to being virtually non-distinguishable from other Hindu sects, i.e. what defines other Hindu sects as being Hindu also applies to ISKCON.

Bud also said:

> In simple terms there is Hinduism and then there is ISKCON. So far as I am concerned ISKCON is its own religion and should be respected. However if ISKCON claims to the public that ISKCON is part of Hinduism then ISKCON is being blatantly untruthful and falls right into the category of a religious cult.

Like I said, you've got it backward. They usually will say they're not Hindu if asked, in fact some or many of them are militant in their insistence that they aren't Hindu and will write in letters to websites and complain when some ISKCON person is quoted in the media as being Hindu.

Bud, you aren't Hindu/Indian by birth, and clearly don't or haven't spent a lot of time in India lately, or with ISKCON. An average Indian in the west would know how popular ISKCON is, since either they, their family, or people they know go to ISKCON temples. The middle to upper class Hindus in India know of ISKCON as a major religious organization, they get a large amount of free press, and have the strong support of many in the Indian corporate and political world. The lower classes in many big cities know them as well for their leading role as free school meal suppliers.

Recently, when Prabhupada's version of the Bhagavad Gita in Russian which ISKCON publishes, was being targeted for banning in the Russian court system, for the reason of "inciting hatred" in his commentaries, it became a really big deal in the Indian press. The Indian government got involved and spoke to the Russian government. It was all over the TV news, and there was outrage all over India. The Russian ambassador to India apologized and begged forgiveness for the actions of the Russian courts. ISKCON then easily won the case due to all the political pressure. When ISKCON's temple outside London was under threat by zoning laws the result was one of the biggest political demonstrations in history for London, almost all were Indians (36,000), marching on Westminster. Here is an interesting study by an academic on ISKCON's influence in England, it's titled The Iskconisation of British Hinduisms.

Anyone familiar with ISKCON knows they will often deny being Hindu (for authenticity of antiquity), although sometimes for expediency or simplicity they will claim they are, e.g. the Hindu organizations they belong to, or the "Hindu school" they run in England financed by the government—recently visited by the Queen of England and her husband Prince Philip.

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Monster Hotel

I've just watched an animated film released last year by famed animation master Genndy Tartakovsky. It's called *Hotel Transylvania*, and while it's received mixed reviews from critics, it was loved by most everyone else, including me. What struck me afterward was the similarity of the concept of Hotel Transylvania to ISKCONISTAN (ISKCON and the wider Prabhupada following community and organizations).

Hotel Transylvania is a resort hotel for monsters. It was created by Count Dracula specifically to keep humans far away to keep his daughter safe, making it very difficult to get to, with many scary impediments designed to keep humans away. In that world the monsters are afraid of humans, they're civilized monsters, and they've kept themselves away from human society ever since the days when villagers would come after monsters with pitchforks and torches. To the monsters, humans are the real monsters, who they greatly fear like humans fear monsters. But they have little to no knowledge of modern society, still basing their views of humans from what they experienced over 100 years ago.

Prabhupada created ISKCON with the specific intent of creating a refuge from what he taught as a monstrous and scary human society. The modern world is taught as a place that's descended into the darkness of depravity, where around every corner "the witch called maya" is waiting to lure you into her monstrous grasp, where she'll then turn you into a lust filled zombie with nothing on your mind but passionately seeking to satisfy selfish sensual desires. Which in ISKCONISTAN means anything at all other than bhakti-yoga practices, i.e. anything enjoyable in and of itself: music, cinema, theater, books, sports, dance, travel, games, intoxication, sex for pleasure–basically

anything that can be perceived as fun and pleasurable is taught as monstrously selfish and sinful if it isn't directly being experienced as a by-product of your "service." The meaning of service in that context means what you've been deputed to do by your guru. In ISKCONISTAN that service is usually some form of proselytizing activity, either directly, or in some sort of support role. But it can also mean maintaining the temples and ashrams directly, or indirectly through donations. It can also mean supporting the gurus and other full-time bhaktas with money, property, etc.

That's the prevailing dogma taught ad nauseam throughout ISKCONISTAN. Anyone who reads ISKCONISTANI literature or who listens to them teach, knows that interspersed with the ancient yoga theologies of India, you're also constantly bombarded with stories about the monstrous state of the world and the monstrous people in it—all of which must be avoided at all costs. Failing to do so will lead you to you become just like them, i.e. a horrible person whom God can't stand.

The movie starts off with the hotel being visited by many famous monsters, their spouses and their families, to celebrate the birthday of Count Dracula's daughter, Mavis. It's her 118th birthday, which is equivalent in human life to a teenage girl turning 18 (of legal age). Mavis has never left the castle environs and monster society, and is itching to go out and see the human world. Count Dracula is extremely over-protective because his wife was killed by villagers when Mavis was a little girl over 100 years ago. He's intent on making sure Mavis never leaves, scaring her into always staying under his protection. But Mavis has other plans, she has an old postcard from her parent's "Paradise" honeymoon in Hawaii, and badly wants to go out and experience life in the human world. Her father makes it clear that he desperately doesn't want her to go, trying to make her understand that humans are nothing but monsters.

That's the same basic ideology taught in ISKCONISTAN, especially for how they teach about the need to "protect women." Prabhupada taught them that according to Hindu or Vedic teachings that the passing of time is distinguished by different ages or epochs in human development. He taught that we live in the present "Age of Kali," or *Kali Yuga*. *Kali* translates in this context as strife, discord, anger, slander, fear, death, and darkness; *Yuga* translates as epoch, era, or age. According to Prabhupada's understanding of Vedic scriptures, due

to the influence of the time period we live in, society and people in general have gradually been losing all spiritual and saintly qualities, while taking on the aforementioned bad qualities.

After 5,000 years we are deep into the Kali Yuga, the world has now lost practically all goodness, and is mostly filled with “demons” and all societies have become “demonic”—but especially the modern western cultures are taught as monstrous dens of iniquity. And I don’t mean they’re just speaking about the usual targets of modern day religious fundamentalists: liberals, gays, and sexual permissiveness—Prabhupada was against that as well, but he was against so much more.

In ISKCONISTAN, besides the more reasonable opposition to things like animal cruelty, abuse of the environment, and the like—you’re also taught that pretty much every single fun thing in the world is wicked, and a sign of a world gone to sin. Their ideal world is essentially the same as the famously Luddite and completely insular Amish communities in America. Prabhupada instilled in his followers the idea that they should try to create a world unto themselves, in self-sufficient Luddite farming communities (what they call varnashrama), based on the ideals of what he taught as the golden age of human society, i.e ancient Vedic culture. In my previous post I quoted some of Prabhupada’s plans for a more perfect type of society. Still, after close to 50 years, ISKCON has been unable to even come close to fulfilling Prabhupada’s hope of creating little pockets of re-imagined Vedic societies.

A big reason for that is because most people who join or support ISKCON, don’t continue to do so over the long-term—or they support it less and less as time goes by. And a big reason for that is because of the same general reason Count Dracula was unable to keep Mavis from wanting to leave the insular life he created for her. He saw humans as monsters, and human society as a monstrous place—and because of that he believed he had to protect his daughter. But his daughter saw it as a place of adventure and romance, and because of that he was unable to keep her frightened of leaving—and eventually he learns that humans and human society are no longer what he remembered they were when he was younger, and therefore nothing to be afraid of.

In ISKCONISTAN many or most people end up like Count Dracula or Mavis, they

are first led to believe the wider world is a monstrous sinful place to be avoided at all costs, other than for proselytizing. So much so that their ideal living situation is to be completely cut-off from all and any influence of the modern world, in rural communities, living off the grid in imitation of ancient India—which means sans all technology and all cultural influences—where women are seen as child-like and in dire need of "protection." Protection from what? Protection from men who want to exploit them—but more importantly—from themselves. Prabhupada taught that women have no more "discriminatory powers" than a boy. It's amazing he was able to get away with such an insult to women, since it's common knowledge that when it comes to discriminatory powers—boys are about as bad as it gets. Girls on average are commonly understood to be more mature than boys, and boys are commonly understood to be more childish than girls while growing up, and even as adults.

But like Count Dracula and Mavis, most people educated by Prabhupada eventually realize that our world isn't a monstrous place to be avoided at all costs, and because of that they lose interest in how Prabhupada taught them to avoid everything outside of his insular ISKCON society. In the authentic Bhagavat tradition we are taught that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, that our world is either mundane or spiritual based on our vantage point.

Satya translates as true, real, actual, genuine, sincere, honest, and pure. *Satya Yuga* is described as the age of enlightenment, truth, light and beauty. It's taught as the golden age of humanity where everyone is perfect in God consciousness and self-realized—which is described as the understanding of the genuine truth of ourselves and the world around us—wherein we experience God's presence and complete control over everything—within ourselves and all around.

Upon attaining enlightenment (mukti) we transfer from living in the world of ignorance and strife where we see chaos and sin everywhere (within and without) or the *Kali Yuga*—to living in the light of genuine truth, where we see only God's presence and control in and over everything, everywhere, all the time—or the *Satya Yuga, the golden age of enlightenment* .

Prabhupada didn't base his views of women on real world examples, he based it on his belief in the sanctity of India's famously interpolated dharmashastras, which are full of contradictions and Islamic leaning ideas when it comes to

women. Islamic conquerors ruled over much of India for 500 years, their agenda was to convert the Hindus—as it was in all the lands they conquered in that period (the reason there are so many Muslims in South Asia). They enacted all kinds of laws forcing Hindu children to learn Islam, simultaneously curtailing Hindu practices, while also destroying countless temples and building mosques in their place. The dharmashastras, most famously the *Manu Samhita* or smriti, was an obvious choice to interpolate since it was seen as a source of guidance for Hindu life by the Muslims. In truth it was never held in as high esteem as the Muslims thought, nor were any of the dharmashastras, of which there are thousands. The more important sources for Hindus on social matters were the still famous epics like the Mahabharata and Ramayana, and the Puranas and tantras. In those literatures we see a different type of woman than in the contradictory dharmashastras.

The recent debate on giving women the role of a guru in ISKCON showcases the basic problem with their vision of the perfect insular culture they hope to create. In the real world we find women of great ability, great intelligence, and great discriminatory character. In fact it’s generally believed by people that women are less likely to be led by their senses than men, that they in general have more self-control than men. That’s commonly believed because of experience, not because of what a book tells them. In Islamic society, which grew out of the tribal desert cultures where women were seen as property and valued for their slavishness, that ideal of women as slave-like became integrated into the religious teachings and culture that developed around the Qur’an. When they invaded and conquered most of India, they brought their ideas of women and attempted to force the Hindu population to acquiesce to their standards, including interpolating Hindu scriptures to promote Islam and Islamic laws. Which is why previous to the Islamic invasions women were never portrayed in Hindu art wearing saris or covering their faces.

Recently elected to the United States Congress, Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii) was raised in the Gaudiya Vaishnava community (a Hare Krishna community in Hawaii), she went to Hare Krishna schools as a child, and is an openly self-professed Gaudiya Vaishnava who took her oath of office on a Bhagavad Gita. Krishna (God) chose her and not a man—as the first Hindu, the first Gaudiya Vaishnava (Hare Krishna), and the first follower of Prabhupada (she’s his grand-

disciple) to become a leader of the most powerful nation in the world. And not just any type of leader, she is being called their next big “star” by Democrat party leaders, leading media outlets, and Democratic party insiders. She was recently elected unanimously as vice-chair in charge of the Democratic National Committee (the organization in charge of the Democrat political party in America). This next quote is from a *Vogue* magazine article titled *Making a Splash: Is Tulsi Gabbard the Next Democratic Party Star?*

> “She’s our rock star,” says a man in an expensive suit, who hastily adds, “Don’t quote me.” He hands me his card and I understand why: He works for a rival Democratic politician.”

Do the so-called “traditionalists” want her to resign because she’s a woman, a divorced woman at that? Do they really want to advocate that she should give up her lifestyle and find a man to slave over and worship, and do nothing else, because her discriminatory powers are “no better than a boy?” Should she accept that she is a “less intelligent” person who should therefore remain uneducated?

Should she accept the vision of a world where she is allowed nothing more than a role of a second class human being, with no equal rights to do as she pleases, with nothing to aspire to do in life but being a housewife? Should she quit her career and leave everything else in life to the more intelligent and “discriminatory” men we’re told to worship as “good as God”on earth in ISKCON? Even though there is a good cause to consider she may very well become the President of the United States of America, the most powerful country in the world?

Will it be enough to change the sexist attitudes of many of ISKCON's membership and following if one of their own, a woman, becomes queen of the world? I doubt it will change all of them, so many are so sure they are right because Prabhupada convinced them that he was basically infallible, and could never be wrong when it comes to his “spiritual” teachings, i.e. his interpretation of “Vedic” culture and tradition that ISKCON wants to implement and convince everyone in the world to follow.

Even if one of his own female followers ends up basically ruling over the world, many will continue to insist that women should not have the same equal rights as a man because “they are not equal by nature.” That's their bizarre excuse

for their sexist ideology - that because men and women have different psychological makeups, therefore they are not the same, therefore not equal. Women shouldn't receive or even want equal rights to do as they please like men because they are not the same.

It's like saying: Because Christians and Hindus have different psychological makeups, therefore they are not the same, therefore not equal, and therefore should be treated differently with regards to equal rights. It's what's known in logic as a false equivalence, which is a logical fallacy where shared traits and apparent equality are assumed to show a logical equality, when there in fact isn't any.

Being “not the same” in a psychological or physiological sense is not the logical equivalence of “being not equal” in respect to being deserving or not of equal human rights. It may be someone's dogma or philosophy that the differences in the psychology or body of people should determine equal rights, but it's not a logical equivalence as Prabhupada taught his followers to believe. It's a relative equivalence, relative to the belief in some teaching, not to a logical progression of thought, which is exactly how Prabhupada presented it as, i.e. men and women are not the same, not the same means not equal, therefore why should they have equal rights?

To take that false logic to it's logical end, you would also have to accept that because every person, regardless of faith or gender, has a different psychological makeup, therefore no one should have equal rights because no one is the same as anyone else. That is the actual logical progression of that line of reasoning.

To get a glimpse of what I'm writing about, you can hear from one of ISKCON's most vocal supporters of Prabhupada's “perfect” vision for women's roles in society. His Holiness Bhakti Vikas Swami is an Englishman who became a follower of Prabhupada in the '70s, and ended up spending most of his time working for ISKCON in India, where he became a swami and a guru. He has a large following in India, and has been publicly butting heads for some time now on various websites with the more “liberal” or “progressive” members of ISKCON on various issues he believes are not being respected enough, e.g. his insistence on an extremist form of sexism as a God given decree:

> However, ISKCON today encourages independent women preachers who

roam alone around the world without protection. What is the meaning to the rule that women should not take sannyasa if some of them act as de facto sannyasis?

Of course, this raises the question of how otherwise to engage those senior female devotees in ISKCON who come from a decidedly Western background and who never made the cultural transition to the kind of social role exemplified by Kunti, Saci, and others in their old age.

Yet unfortunately by their being independent, itinerant, and female, ISKCON's traveling women preachers embody the feministic ideal: that the biggest, best women are out in the world doing what the men do, with no family connections or responsibilities. This is the same message that has destroyed the social fabric in karmi society in the West, that Feminists worldwide are foisting everywhere, and that is now firmly accepted within ISKCON.

And from another article

Feminists everywhere are busy and effective in changing every facet of civilization to fit their belief. Intrinsic to their politics is the gross condemnation of anyone who wishes to uphold traditional values. Feminists presume that male traditionalists simply wish to manipulate women, and that female traditionalists are dupes; both are enemies of humanity and deserve to be denigrated in the most graphic terms.

It might have been hoped that such rhetoric would not enter Vaisnava discourse on gender issues. But alas, it is not below the dignity of even the Dandavats website to publish the terms "taliban" and "patriarch" in relation to devotees who argue, with reference to guru, sadhu, and sastra, for traditional gender roles in Vaisnava society.

Such pejoratives more reflect Western conditioning than the sastra-caksu through which devotees are meant to see the world. Although to Westerners "Taliban" might seem a natural metaphor for "terrorist," in certain countries there are many ordinary citizens who feel a comparable abhorrence toward Western governments who have devastated their homeland. Similarly, the scornful use of the term "patriarch" is loaded with the feminist ideology that is inculcated by the Western media.

Admittedly, the values of ISKCON's traditionalists are extremely different from those of modern Western society. However, to therefore insinuate that such traditionalists are dangerous, nasty extremists (like the Taliban) is to assume a position closer to that of the modern West than to that of Srila Prabhupada, from whom ISKCON's traditionalists imbibe what others see as their extremism. It is undeniable that Srila Prabhupada's outlook on almost all social issues is extremely different to that which is widely accepted in Western society.

As Dr. J. Stillson Judah wrote in his 1974 book "Hare Krishna and the Counterculture":

'The position of women in the Society may not appeal to Americans interested in women's liberation. Swami Bhaktivedanta says that all women other than one's wife are to be considered as one's mother, and yet he regards them as prone to degradation, of little intelligence, and untrustworthy. They should not be given as much freedom as men, but should be treated like children; they should be protected all during their lives, by their fathers when young, later by their husbands, and in their old age, by their sons … This view is largely consonant with the traditional one found in the ancient Indian law books (dharmashastras, Ed.). Females may not become presidents of any temple, nor occupy positions of authority. They may do the cooking, help with the devotional services and maintenance of the temple and prepare the flower offerings for Krishna.' (Judah, 1974:86)

How is it that Dr. Judah, who was a friend of Srila Prabhupada's and of our movement, made such observations if they were not accurate? Moreover, Srila Prabhupada stated that he had read and approved of Judah's book (see conversation, June 20, 1975). No doubt Srila Prabhupada would have expressed concern if he had felt misrepresented by Dr. Judah.

Srila Prabhupada made literally dozens of non-PC statements. For instance in the following conversation:

Prabhupada: So far gurukula is concerned, that also, I have given program. They have given the name of "girls." We are not going to do that.

Tamala Krsna: What is that?

Prabhupada: Girls. Boys and girls. That is dangerous. Girls should be completely separated from the very beginning. They are very dangerous.

Tamala Krsna: So we're… I thought there were girls in Vrndavana now. They said that they're going to have the girls' gurukula behind the boys' gurukula. Gopala was talking about that.

Prabhupada: No, no, no. No girls.

Tamala Krsna: It should be in another city or somewhere else.

Prabhupada: Yes. They should be taught how to sweep, how to stitch, clean, cook, to be faithful to the husband.

Tamala Krsna: They don't require a big school.

Prabhupada: No, no. That is mistake. They should be taught how to become obedient to the husband.

Tamala Krsna: Yeah, you won't learn that in school. Prabhupada: Little education, they can…

Tamala Krsna: Yeah. That they can get at home also.

Prabhupada: They should be stopped, this practice of prostitution. This is a very bad system in Europe and America. The boys and girls, they are educated, coeducation. From the very beginning of their life they become prostitutes. And they encourage. They distribute pills. I have seen the boys and girls dancing together, embracing, in the school film. That ruins the career. Both of them are ruined. That is very regrettable. Then you shall require this sterilization, pills, another big program. They are creating animal civilization, and when the animals are disturbing, they are trying to find out some other means. This is their program. First of all create animals. Then, when the animals behave like animals, then another program. Why do you create animal? Woman brahmacarini, this is artificial.

Tamala Krsna: In our centers, though, there are so many brahmacarinis, and even sometimes they're encouraged to remain brahmacarini.

Prabhupada: That they cannot. As soon as they will find opportunity, they will become vyabhicarini [sexually deviated]. For woman, protection.

Tamala Krsna: So you don’t advocate this remaining sing…, these women remaining brahmacarinis.

Prabhupada: Therefore polygamy was allowed. Let them be taken care of, one husband, three wives.

(April 29, 1977)

Mainstream Western thought would classify such statements of Srila Prabhupada as extremist, sexist, or maybe Talibanist. And it appears that members of ISKCON who acquiesce with mainstream Western thought think similarly about those devotees who maintain faith in such words of Srila Prabhupada.

What should we do with such statements? Expunge them from the Vedabase? Explain them as the eccentricity of an elderly Bengali gentleman? Or that they are merely the material, not spiritual, teachings of Srila Prabhupada and thus invalid? To simply ignore such statements is not an option because there are followers of Srila Prabhupada who take very seriously the principle “guru-mukha-padma-vakya cittete kariya aikya ara na kariha mane asa” and who will not very easily allow Srila Prabhupada’s words to be forgotten or recast in the light of various popular theories.

Undoubtedly, we have to consider carefully how to present and apply Srila Prabhupada’s teachings to a world that is not very open to them. But we are in danger of losing our connection with Srila Prabhupada if members of our own ranks adopt the prevailing dogmas of the misled civilization and employ them to attack those followers of Srila Prabhupada who are trying to uphold his message in its most pristine form.

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Things they would not teach me of in college

In a comment to a previous post Jamadagni wrote:

> Nice discussion.
>
> Having only briefly read through this thread, certain issues pop out at me:
>
> 1. we need further discussion about the notion of free will in vaishnava theology.

First we need a definition of free will that we can all agree on. If you look up free will in any dictionary you will get some variation of this from the Oxford English Dictionary:

> The power to act without the constraints of necessity or fate; the ability to act at one's own discretion.

Shastra teaches that we do not have free will according to the above definition. We are taught that we are constrained by our nature and karma. The ontological nature of the jiva is taught by Krishna in the Gita:

> 9.10
>
> **mayadhyakshena prakritih / suyate sa-caracaram**
> **hetunanena kaunteya / jagad viparivarttate**
>
> Prakriti works under my supervision, *mayadhyakshena prakritih*, manifesting all created things, *suyate sa-caracaram*. This is how the universe works son of Kunti, *hetunanena kaunteya jagad viparivarttate*.
>
> 13.30
>
> **prakrityaiva ca karmani / kriyamanani sarvasah**

yah pasyati tathatmanam / akarttaram sa pasyati

All activities taking place, in all respects, are performed by prakriti, *prakrtyaiva ca karmani kriyamanani sarvasah*. Who sees, *yah pasyati*, that the atma is not the doer, *atmanam akarttaram*, he sees, *sah pasyati*.

After speaking almost the entire Gita we get to the last few slokas where Krishna sums up his message to Arjuna. The Gita began with Arjuna saying he wasn't going to fight. After speaking on the nature of the atman in relation to Param Atman, Krishna ends with telling Arjuna:

18.59-61

yad ahankaram asritya / na yotsya iti manyase
mithyaiva vyavasayas te / prakritis tvam niyokshyati

You were thinking that you will not fight, *na yotsya iti manyase*. But that is due to your misconception of your self and reality, *yad ahankaram asritya* . That resolution was in vain, *mithyaiva vyavasayas te*, prakriti will engage you (make you fight), *prakritis tvam niyokshyati*.

svabhava-jena kaunteya / nibaddhah svena karmana
karttum necchasi yan mohat / karishyasy avaso 'pi tat

Your desire is illusory, *karttum necchasi yan mohat*. Bound by actions, *nibaddhah svena karmana*, born of your nature son of Kunti, *svabhava-jena kaunteya*, helpless, you will act *karishyasy avaso 'pi tat*.

isvarah sarva-bhutanam / hrid-dese 'rjuna tishthati
bhramayan sarva-bhutani / yantrarudhani mayaya

The supreme controller is at the heart of all beings Arjuna, *isvarah sarva-bhutanam hrid-dese 'rjuna tishthati*, motivating the movements of all living beings, *bhramayan sarva-bhutani*, who are mounted on the machine of his universal potency, *yantrarudhani mayaya*.

Even if you don't accept the shastric version of reality, through logic and analysis it can be shown that we do not possess free will:

How do we make decisions and then act on them? Our actions are seemingly determined by either 1) following through on our thoughts 2) by spontaneous reflexive action 3) by a combination of both:

1) If I decide to turn on my computer and write a blog, that action seems to be determined by my thoughts. I think I decided to do something and then I did it following through on my thoughts.

2) As I'm writing this blog if I hit the table with my knee and my glass of water starts to fall down, without thinking I try to grab it before it falls. It's a reflexive action.

3) As I am typing this blog the keys I am hitting are based on my thoughts, but I am not telling my fingers to type. I desire them to type and they seem to act under their own power as the words pop into my mind. The action of my typing these words is a combination of thought and reflexive action.

Seemingly my thoughts cause most of my actions. But it can be logically shown that I do not control comprehension of my thoughts:

How do we experience thought? Thought appears as either words or dialogues of words in our mind. Seemingly we hear our thoughts. Thoughts seem to be a type of sound without being comprised of sound waves. We hear our thoughts in a different way than how we hear sound waves through our ears. When we hear sound through our ears the sound had to be created through a vibration that causes a disruption in a medium; such as air or water. Then our ears catch those vibrations. If you hit a piano key the vibration of the piano in the air creates sound waves, which then vibrates our eardrums allowing us to hear the sound.

What causes the sound of our thoughts? Are we causing the thought sounds? If so, how? We don't know. All we know is that thoughts appear in our mind and we hear them and usually believe that we are causing them to appear.

But in reality we don't know the mechanics of how to make thoughts appear. Can anyone tell me what process occurs which gives me provable control over the thoughts that appear in my mind? We don't know what or where that process is. Therefore we can't say we know how to control it. Thoughts appear in our mind and we have no provable idea of how that happens. Why should we believe that we are in control of our thoughts if we don't know how the actual process of creating and controlling thoughts occurs?

How do we understand our thoughts? Thoughts flow through our mind in one or more languages. How do we understand languages? How do we know the word

meanings and grammar? If I experience the thought: *I'm going to cook rice*; how do I understand what the word rice means? People can say that I went through an experience of learning those words. Now I understand them because I remember what I learned. Sounds reasonable. But how do I remember? How does the memory of those word meanings become known to me now?

I know from memory of past experience that the word *rice* means the grain of the rice plant. Where is that memory of the meaning of the word *rice* stored and how is it made available to me? However that occurs, I know for certain one thing: I know that I have no control over how my past experiences are stored or made available to me as my memory. The ability to control memory is outside of my control. For example: If I ask you to explain the plot of a movie you saw - what do you do to find the memory of the movie when you try to recount what you saw? There is nothing that you can do. You don't know where nor how to find a memory. Memory just appears in your mind. You don't search for it because you don't know where nor how to perform a search. However our memory functions, it is obviously not due to our control over it.

What can we conclude?:

1) To understand our thoughts, we need memory to understand the language of our thoughts.

2) We don't control memory.

3) We don't know what kind of "sound" thoughts are comprised of, nor how to create or control thought sound. Therefore we don't know how our thoughts appear.

4) Thoughts appear in our mind without our knowing how to create nor control thought, nor what thought even is. Memory enables us to understand the language of our thoughts. We understand the language of our thoughts without controlling nor understanding how our memory functions.

5) If we perform actions based on our thoughts - it can be shown that we do not control our actions because we don't know how to control neither the creation nor comprehension of our thoughts.

6) Therefore we do not control our actions if our actions are controlled by our thoughts.

So even if we do not believe shastra when it says that we do not have free will, when we are told that Paramatma controls us by functioning as and controlling our mind, still it can be shown through logical analysis that we do not control our thought process. Therefore we do not have control over our actions or will.

Many devotees and gurus tell us that we do have free will. But they are either mistranslated or they are not using the term free will in the normative sense. Or they are mistaken. Often they make the argument:

> We have to have free will. Otherwise how can we have karma? How can we be held accountable for our choices if we have no free will?

Shastra and logical analysis inform us that we do not have free will, i.e. - The power to act without the constraints of necessity or fate; the ability to act at one's own discretion.

We have the innate ability to desire, but not the free will to carry out that desire. Bhakti is about purification of desire by the destruction of avidya and ahankara. We don't have the free will to choose what path we go down in anything we do or experience. By our desire to be independent from the reality of what we are; by our desire to not live under the control of another being; we end up being put into a situation by that being which will eventually purify our desire. We have no other choice but to exist under the control of another being. We simply cannot exist without being under the control of God. We are totally dependent on God for our ability to function as intelligent people. We can't control our thoughts, our memory, our actions. We simply do not have the same ability that God has to exist independently.

People take birth after birth deluded by avidya and ahankara until their desire is purified. Their desire shapes their actions, not by their own free will, but by the will of Paramatma in deciding what the jiva needs to experience to become free from aversion to God's control. Karma is much more complex than people often think. Often karma is seen as a simple action-reaction; you do bad you are punished. The reality is that karma is designed to purify the desire of the jiva. It's not about vengeance; it's about changing aversion to acceptance of God's control.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu told Sri Sanatana Goswami

kṛṣṇa bhuli' sei jīva anādi-bahirmukha

ataeva māyā tāre deya saḿsāra-duḥkha

Prabhupada translated that sloka like this:

> kṛṣṇa bhuli’ — forgetting Kṛṣṇa; sei jīva — that living entity; anādi — from time immemorial; bahir-mukha — attracted by the external feature; ataeva — therefore; māyā — illusory energy; tāre — to him; deya — gives; saḿsāra-duḥkha — miseries of material existence.
>
> Forgetting Kṛṣṇa, the living entity has been attracted by the external feature from time immemorial. Therefore the illusory energy [māyā] gives him all kinds of misery in his material existence.

That’s not exactly what the sloka says. Prabhupada translates *bahir-mukha* as “attracted by the external feature”. Bahir-mukha means to face outward or away from. The cause of the jiva being subject to karma and samsara is because the jiva doesn’t want to accept the reality of being part of and under the control of God. It has nothing to do with being “attracted by the external feature”, or “desire to enjoy”, which are often wrongly cited as the cause of the jiva’s conditioned existence. There is nothing inherently wrong in the desire for enjoyment. Why would there be?

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Temple of everlasting light

This is a reply to Sanjaya's comment to the In The Beginning post, he wrote:

> Vrajabhumi, you quote Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati:
>
> "Visnu has three energies, one of them is meant for manifestation of His eternal abode, another Potency is for creating all human souls who are emanations from His tatastha-sakti found between the temporal and eternal worlds. By this potency He creates human souls. The human soul has two different predilections. If he desires to serve Godhead he is allowed into the Eternal Region. If he desires to lord it over this world he comes down for enjoying in different capacities the products of the Deluding Potency."
>
> I saw that this part, "If he desires to serve Godhead he is allowed into the Eternal Region. If he desires to lord it over this world he comes down for enjoying in different capacities the products of the Deluding Potency" is identical with what Sridhar Maharaj stated, "So, from the marginal position they choose either the side of exploitation or the side of dedication".
>
> And after that Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati also stated, "Tatastha has both the power of associating with temporal as well as eternal planes. Souls who have got their stations at tatastha have got free will. Each of the individual souls by exercising his free will can abuse or properly use his independence…"
>
> Can you explain more about this, especially why Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati seems to confirm about free will?

As for Sridhar Maharaj — he made it sound as if when the jiva is first awakened

to full consciousness that it's at *that* point where the jiva can choose it's destiny, at least that's what it seems he's saying. He may not have meant that due to his poor proficiency with English, or some other reason. Obviously it's impossible for a newborn baby to have enough intellectual development to choose something as profound as what he's talking about. Do you really think Krishna would decide the fate of people based on the desire of a newborn baby? We need to use common sense when presented with various claims by various people on spiritual topics. It's ridiculous to claim that given the choice of living in bliss with ever youthful bodies in heaven with God vs. living with the suffering of disease, old age and death — that anyone would choose the latter.

As for free will, we need to understand what that means — it's the concept of being able to act independently of some other controlling factor. The shastra is quite clear that free will is an illusion. Also as I have pointed out, using logic and scientific understanding — we simply don't possess the knowledge or the ability on how to think or act independently, see Things they would not teach me of in college.

With Bhaktisiddhanta we have a bit of a problem if we don't have the original books since his words on the Internet are translations. The problem is with Gaudiya Vaishnava translators who don't translate literally because they have their own ideas of what a writer meant, i.e. they often don't stick to literal translations, they add or remove stuff based on what they think the original author meant to say if they don't understand what the guru said; or they don't understand how to properly put it in another language; and more often they add their own opinions for another reason, i.e. to gain corroboration for their own ideas and teachings. For example:

If you tell people their fate is predestined, then you may think they won't have such a strong impetus to surrender to you or your organization. But if you tell them that they're in control of their own destiny, and that they chose to suffer in samsara by their own free will, and that the only way out of samsara is to choose to surrender to and serve a guru, then you may believe that there's a greater chance for them to feel the need to surrender and serve you or your organization.

"Free will" in English means "being able to act independently of some other controlling factor," anybody who is educated in the Gita or Bhagavatam or

other shastra would know that Krishna and shastra makes it clear that the jiva is not independent; the jiva is not “the doer”; that Krishna is in control of the jiva as paramatma or antaryami; that the mind of the jiva is controlled by and a manifestation of God.

We can see the problems with translation with the two different versions of *Jaiva Dharma* coming from different Gaudiya Math devotees; and also with the translations or transliterations of Narayana Maharaja’s lectures or books, as I’ve written about and shown previously, see Narayana Maharaja's Guru Tattva.

I doubt Bhaktisiddhanta said what the translation has him saying about free will, it sounds like something added by the translator. This next essay is also from Bhaktisiddhanta, while it doesn’t explicitly mention “free will,” the obvious implication is that nobody has free will since he’s stating that no one can change anybody’s destiny — i.e. if you had free will you would be able to change the course of your own and anybody’s destiny, which is a concept he’s very strongly and explicitly against. If you had free will you could change anyone’s life, you could change their destiny or karma, and your own, thereby making the concept of karma obsolete. Karma is based on the concept of your life being predestined, how can that be if anybody has the free will to do what they want and therefore change your destiny? There can be no karma if everyone is an independent actor. The concept of karma is the antithesis of free will. And as I’ve explained before — it’s wrong to explain karma as simple action=reaction. Karma is not about a reaction to your actions, it’s about giving you what you need to spiritually evolve.

Because this entire essay is about that one point, we know it’s not from the idea of the translator:

> From The Harmonist, May 1932, issue number 11. Article originally titled, Sree Chaitanya in South India. Pages 325-326.
>
> By Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur
>
> The world stands in no need of any reformer. The world has a very competent person for guiding its minutest happenings. The person who determines that there is scope for reform of the world, himself stands in need of reform. The world goes on in its own perfect way. No person can deflect it even the breadth of a hair from the course chalked out for it by

> providence. When we perceive any change being actually effected in the course of events of this world by the agency of any particular individual, we must know very well that the agent possesses no real power at any stage. The agent finds himself driven forward by a force belonging to a different category from himself. The course of the world does not require to be changed by the agency of any person. What is necessary is to change our outlook on this world. This was done for the contemporary generation by the mercy of Sri Chaitanya. It can only be known to recipients of his mercy. The scriptures declare that it is only necessary to listen with an open mind to the name of Krishna from the lips of a bona fide devotee. As soon as Krishna enters the listening ear, he clears up the vision of the listener so that he no longer has any ambition of ever acting the part of a reformer of any other person, because he finds that nobody is left without the very highest guidance. It is therefore his own reform, by the grace of God, whose supreme necessity and nature he is increasingly able to realize, by the eternally continuing mercy of the Supreme Lord

Sanjaya also wrote in the next comment:

> But I kind of understand it after read Blissful's comment,
>
> "Aversion to God (after inception) is understandable due to the inherent ignorant state of being of the body at its conception. But not envy, not jealousy.
>
> The body does not know the presence of the soul within itself at its inception. So, everything it does it thinks that he is the doer. But due to the mercy of the Lord, his eyes are opened. When it is opened, he sees himself not as the body but as the soul. That ignites his spiritual light; and he slowly seeks knowledge to understand himself. Once he knows himself as his original spiritual state of being, he understands everyone/every being around him. When he understands every being around him, he understands God."
>
> Is this the answer?

Yes, sort of. Blissful was paraphrasing what I had written in a previous comment to him, here it is:

In the Bhagavatam Krishna says to Uddhava:

> ekasyaiva mamamsasya
> jivasyaiva maha-mate
> bandho ‘syavidyayanadir
> vidyaya ca tathetarah
>
> ekasya — of the one; eva — certainly; mama — My; amsasya — part and parcel; jivasya — of the living entity; eva — certainly; maha-mate — O most intelligent one; bandhah — bondage; asya — of him; avidyaya — by ignorance; anadih — beginningless; vidyaya — by knowledge; ca — and; tatha — similarly; itarah — the opposite of bondage, liberation.
>
> **O most intelligent Uddhava, the living entity, called jiva, is part and parcel of Me, but due to ignorance he has been suffering in material bondage since time immemorial. By knowledge, however, he can be liberated.**

Prabhupada didn’t translate the 11th canto so that’s not his translation. In the Sanskrit the word *time* is not there. This is straight from Krishna. The conditioned jivas have been so without beginning. *Adi* means beginning and *anadi* means without or no beginning. Anadi doesn’t mean “from time immemorial” in this context, although it can in other contexts. *Time immemorial* means time long past, beyond memory or record. These are two very different concepts. Krishna says the avidya, the ignorance of the bound jiva is anadi, without beginning. The above translation makes it seem that the ignorance had a beginning.

Sri Chaitanya said:

krsna bhuli’ sei jiva anadi-bahirmukha
ataeva maya tare deya samsara-duhkha

“The jivas have been averse to Krishna without a beginning.”

If we translate anadi in both of the above contexts as “since a very long time ago,” then it would contradict what Krishna says in the Gita about liberated souls never losing their position — he makes it clear in two verses (8.15, 8.21) about never falling into mahamaya and samsara from a liberated position. That is why liberated souls are called nitya-mukta (forever liberated) or nitya-siddha

(forever perfected) in shastra.

If the jivas had been with Krishna and rejected him then their rejection would've had a point of origination. Their rejection wouldn't be without beginning. That's why Prabhupada mistranslated anadi as "time immemorial" in those verses — he needed for jivas to have at some point in the past rejected Krishna and Vaikuntha, since he taught the concept of "Back to Godhead," where he claims we used to physically live in heaven with God and yet chose to reject that life.

The concepts being taught from the verses above — ignorance without beginning, and aversion to Krishna without beginning, refute any idea that Gaudiya Vaishnavism should be teaching that the bound jiva was full of knowledge and bliss at some time in the past living with Krishna in Vaikuntha. Add to that the places where Krishna states that no one falls down from the highest plane of existence — there should be no argument about what shastra teaches, regardless of what anyone else says.

Hrdayananda Goswami claims that in *Sri Chaitanya's teachings*, which is a compilation of letters and maybe other stuff by Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, there is a place where he claims Bhaktisiddhanta says that the bound jiva once was in the highest plane.

From *Our Original Position* by Hrdayananda Goswami

> "It is the jivas who are the attendants in His [Krishna's] Sports. They become attached to matter having deviated from their own essential nature as the result of their desire for enjoyment. But when again the soul of a jiva, gains true wisdom of the transcendental region of God…, he begins to get back his pure essential nature gradually…" (Sri Caitanya's Teachings, p. 323; emphasis ours)

The context is missing from that quote. Bhaktisiddhanta was preaching to an American scholar, and he was speaking in general about Gaudiya teachings. His point was that the jivas have a pure or essential state of being, the translator put that across in the sense of an "original" or past state of being, but that isn't what Bhaktisiddhanta meant, or taught in other places:

From his *Sri Chaitanya's Teachings*:

> Visnu has three energies, one of them is meant for manifestation of His

> eternal abode, another Potency is for creating all human souls who are emanations from His tatastha-sakti found between the temporal and eternal worlds. By this potency He creates human souls. The human soul has two different predilections. If he desires to serve Godhead he is allowed into the Eternal Region. If he desires to lord it over this world he comes down for enjoying in different capacities the products of the Deluding Potency.

Either way we have to reject any theology that contradicts Krishna himself.

Another thing Blissful, it's million, not billion, and either way it's probably not meant to be taken as an exact literal number. As to when God created bodies, that takes a deeper understanding of the difference between the "spiritual world" and the "material world" than what is usually thought of by a neophyte.

There really is no essential difference between the spiritual world and the material world. The essential difference is between a liberated jiva and a bound jiva. I talk about this concept at See me, Feel me

Brahma Samhita 5.29

> cintamani-prakara-sadmasu kalpa-vrksa-
> laksavrtesu surabhir abhipalayantam
> laksmi-sahasra-sata-sambhrama-sevyamanam
> govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami
>
> cintamani–touchstone; prakara–groups made of; sadmasu–in abodes; kalpa-vrksa–of desire trees; laksa–by millions; avrtesu–surrounded; surabhih–surabhi cows; abhipalayantam–tending; laksmi–of goddesses of fortune; sahasra–of thousands; sata–by hundreds; sambhrama–with great respect; sevyamanam–being served; govindam–Govinda; adi-purusam–the original person; tam–Him; aham–I; bhajami–worship.
>
> **I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, the first progenitor who is tending the cows, yielding all desire, in abodes built with spiritual gems, surrounded by millions of purpose trees, always served with great reverence and affection by hundreds of thousands of laksmis or gopis.**

Aren't all trees desire or "purpose trees," fulfilling so many purposes and

desires? With the right perspective isn’t chintamani everywhere?

From Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta Ādi 5.18-21

> Like the transcendental body of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Gokula is all-pervading, infinite and supreme. It expands both above and below, without any restriction.
>
> That abode is manifested within the material world by the will of Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is identical to that original Gokula; they are not two different bodies.
>
> The land there is touchstone [cintāmaṇi], and the forests abound with desire trees. Material eyes see it as an ordinary place.
>
> But with the eyes of love of Godhead one can see its real identity as the place where Lord Kṛṣṇa performs His pastimes with the cowherd boys and cowherd girls

I’ve also written more on this at See Me, Feel Me

4

It's just a spring clean for the may queen

This is a reply to Confused from his comment on the Inconceivably We're One, But We're Not The same post.

> Why would God allow us to feel, either through delusion, ignorance or aversion, the sensation of suffering? Even if suffering is in itself not real, we still believe in it and suffer the emotional/intuitive reaction to it (as in the intuition to do or not do based on the consequence of pain, emotional, psychological or physical). This is the meaning I was hoping for behind the question of simply Why the jiva originates as avidya since beginningless time rather than prema.

Why are babies born in avidya? That is the nature of being born. You are born as a tabula rasa. Suffering is real, if you experience something than it is real.

> Why aversion rather than love. Why ignorance rather than knowledge. Why impure rather than pure. Why any sense, real or unreal, or any sense at all, of duality.

You cannot be born enlightened. Knowledge is not inherent in anything. Knowledge is the result of acquisition of experience. When you are born you have no experience and therefore no knowledge. If God had the ability to make you perfectly aware of reality and truth from birth, than that would be reality. In sci-fi films or books there is often a device that downloads immense amounts of knowledge and experience into a person's brain in a short amount of time like a software program being downloaded onto a hard drive. That person then *knows* all sorts of things that were never directly experienced. God can't do that because it is impossible. God cannot do the impossible. The only way for a conscious being to learn something from birth is through physical or mental

experience.

The opposite of aversion isn’t love. In the sense I use aversion it means uncomfortable, like a person uncomfortable in a very hot humid climate. You may love something but be averse to it, like allergies to certain foods or animals. People are not automatically able to deal with the absolute truth of reality in a way that satisfies God. Why do we exist in the first place? God wanted to share life with other people. But the nature of reality for us is that we are unable to function independently from God functioning as our mind and will power. God has the ability to do that because God is an immense and powerfully complex being.

To be able to think for yourself is no small accomplishment. We take it for granted that thinking is easy because we don’t see the process that is creating thought. We simply experience thought in our mind, we simply experience the actions of our bodies, but we do not see the process that is causing these things to go on. Therefore we take them for granted and don’t realize just how much work God has to do for us to experience our life the way we do. Every cell in our body is a supercomputer/automated factory that God designed, and is making sure is functioning. What to speak of other realities that are invisible to our eyes.

For us to be able to understand anything we are dependent on memory, otherwise whatever we experience from moment to moment would never be “learned”. Learning is based on memory of experience. How do we remember anything? We just do, without our control over the process of remembrance. That function is a highly sophisticated process which is dependent on God being aware of all of our experiences, all the words and concepts we have ever experienced, and making us able to understand that knowledge and experience from moment to moment. If God didn’t do this for us than we would be like new born infants at every moment. How does God do that for us? God needs a process and ability that is far greater than our own or any computer.

In order for us to be independently able to have control over our minds and memory, and therefore our lives, we would need to be like God. We would need to have the ability of a super conscious supercomputer. Only God has that ability because of the omnipotent omniscient nature of God. Everything that exists is a part of God, therefore there is nothing outside of God’s being. It

would take another being like God to do what God can do, i.e. think and act independently. Because there is nothing outside of God, God cannot create another being like God because it would need to have the same all pervading powers that God has - and there already is one being who is using all the powers of infinity as it's own being.

So we are the best that God can do when it comes to creating other people. Considering that the chances of being alive are rather slim, and the chances of being alive in a universe where there is an all-pervading all-powerful eternal being in total control over the universe who can give us a life of endless varieties of pleasure and happiness…forever, it's not such a bad deal even if we may have to suffer for a short period of time after being born. Forever is a pretty long time in comparison.

> God must be all-powerful to be God. If we are under the control of God at all times, in terms of no free will and in all other senses, why would he, essentially, control us to believe, ever, that we were suffering, whether that suffering is real or not? If our aversion is in relation to samsara, why would He ever allow us to undergo it? As a lesson plan seems like a strange idea to me when it comes to omnipotence.

It's a learning experience that we need to go through in order to be able to live at the highest level of existence forever. We need to trust that God knows what is best. Suffering causes us to learn. If you put your hand in a fire you suffer, from that experience you know to never put your hand in a fire again. I can't explain in minute detail the scientific rationale God uses for putting us through what we experience in our material existence. No one can but God, but we wouldn't understand it because it would be like trying to explain rocket science to your cat. Suffice it to say that we are lucky to be alive, and that by practicing bhakti yoga we can become perfected. We can then realize our eternal relationship with God, and then enter into an eternal life of bliss.

5

Only love will take you there

This is a response to a comment from Seeker to the Devil Inside post.

The first essay by Kundali is typical, and typically without any shastric justification, and typically contradicts shastra, as is typically the case for people who learned from Prabhupada or similar teachers.

Kundali presents a basic falsehood:

> We, being part and parcel of Him, have these same opulences, but to a far lesser degree. God is the supreme creator, and we too have some creative ability. God is the supreme independent person, and we too have minute independence, or free will.

That’s typically what you hear from Prabhupada followers, e.g. the jiva is some type of miniature version of God, therefore whatever God can do we can do in a minute way. That conception was made up by Prabhupada as far as I know, maybe he heard it from some other person, but it’s not what shastra teaches. The truth is the jiva is hardly at all like God, we differ in so many ways, in no way does the shastra teach that we are miniature versions of God with the same abilities in minute form. We don’t have the ability to control our thought process — we’re not the mind nor in control of it. Shastra teaches that paramatma manifests the mind, and that paramatma controls our thought process though control of memory and computational ability, and actual formation of thoughts — all the work of paramatma. All we do is hear our thoughts. Shastra also states we don’t even control our body. If we don’t control the mind or the body, therefore whatever will we have is not free because we have no control over what we do or think.

Bhaktivinoda gives the example of the arm and person moving the arm to

describe the relationship between shakti and shaktiman. The jiva is a shakti or energy of God. God is shaktiman — the energy plus the controller of the energy. He states that shakti has no will of it's own, shakti follows the will of shaktiman like the arm of a person follows the will of the person. When a person moves his arm you don't say the arm is moving under it's own power, you say the person is moving his arm. Whatever will power the jiva appears to have is actually the manifestation of shaktiman, the possessor and controller of shakti. The jivashakti manifests the power of shaktiman's will.

We are described as an *amsa*, a part of God, like a limb is a part of a body. Specially we are described as vibhinnamsa. *Vibhinna* means separate or changed, vibhinnamsa means a separate or changed part of God. We're separate because we're like an arm on the body of a person. That is, we're one with the body, but the person in the brain is in control of the arm. We're somewhat separate from that controlling person, we don't have control over the body, and we don't exist in the brain, we're the arm, a controlled part of the person.

Although, outside of that analogy, we can't actually control our arm because we don't know how, it just appears that we control it when we move it. If I asked you how you move your arm, what can you say? You don't know how, it seems to respond if you desire it to move. But the truth is we don't actually give instructions to our body to do things. Sometimes we feel like we're controlled by our body, while other times we feel like our desire somehow causes our body to fulfill that desire. But in fact we never actually do anything to make it respond to our desire. Like if you desire your car to move, you have to switch on the ignition, then control it with the pedal and steering wheel. But when moving our body, which is vastly more complex than a car, we do nothing, we.just.move. It simply moves without the need of us doing anything to make it move.

If you observe closely you will notice that your body seems to move by itself. This is especially noticeable when you do anything that takes some speed or specific expertise, like when you write or type anything quickly, or if you play music, dance, or sports. If you pay close attention to the difference between what your hands or feet are doing and your thoughts, you should notice that your hands or feet seem to work independently from your thought process —

they just seem to know what to do and where to move without you making them go. People typically refer to this phenomena as “second nature,” they think that you become so used to doing something that you do it without any seeming thought or control.

But the reality is that you never had control, and you never think about how to do it, unless you’re learning some skill. But even than you’re not actually learning how to move your body or limbs in a specific way, nor are you telling or explicitly controlling your body, your just getting used to moving with it in specific ways. Here’s a simple experiment to get my point across:

Relax your body. Now pay attention to your thoughts before and while you do the next thing — try and slowly raise an arm or leg.

What did you notice? You did nothing but desire, then your arm or leg lifted up.

Let’s try the same thing with your thoughts. Pay attention to your thoughts when I ask you this next thing — what is your name?

What happened? Probably you heard your name in your mind being spoken. It just appeared without any effort from you. That’s how all thoughts appear in our mind, they just show up.

It’s actually paramatma moving your hands, your body and thoughts. I go into that in more detail at Things they would not teach me of in college.

Kundali wrote:

> In other words, although we have free will, still, because of our minuteness, our highest beatitude is to be sheltered and controlled by God. Our minute free will is manifest, however, in the form of our prerogative to choose between staying under Krishna’s control in the spiritual world, His abode, or coming to the material world and trying to enjoy apart from Krishna.

That’s not in shastra, and it makes no sense. Who would choose to suffer through samsara if they could avoid it? “Trying to enjoy apart from Krishna” wouldn’t be the problem, insanity would. Again, this is stuff Prabhupada made up or learned from some other person, it presumes the jiva left the spiritual world to come to the material world to try to enjoy apart from God. That isn’t what shastra teaches. It’s what Prabhupada teaches.

Kundali wrote:

> Furthermore, we can understand that in spite of the law of karma, moral and legal judgments are still relevant, because we do have some limited choice to react morally or immorally to the various situations we encounter due to our past karma. And because we have choices, our feelings of regret and remorse are also valid.

He just assumes we're in control of our thought process and have free will to react "morally or immorally," he then presents that as proof of free will. That's another type of circular reasoning.

Kundali wrote:

> The very fact that determinists bother to argue the question shows their implicit acceptance that some free will exists. Or they must agree that they have been engaged by fate to waste their time arguing, another "curious logical predicament."

That's nonsensical. Having no free will means you don't have control over what you will do, as in choosing whether or not to debate free will. Just because he can't understand the benefit of debating free will, that doesn't mean God wouldn't have you do it, i.e. if something someone does doesn't make sense to you therefore God wouldn't have them do it, is a poor argument for free will. That type of argument is typically used by evolutionists to deny design, they argue: "God wouldn't have done it this way, therefore God didn't." It's a type of circular reasoning.

Kundali wrote:

> If we are merely pawns in the hands of fate, how can we be punishable for doing what we couldn't possibly have avoided? If we say, "Well, punishment is also predetermined," then punishment loses all moral significance, If we then claim that punishment is useful because it can alter the factors that determine a criminal's behavior, then we must assume the judges are free agents in their decision to punish. This simply proves that for morality to be meaningful, someone must be assumed free.

Well, just because he doesn't understand something isn't proof against it. Here he presents another logical fallacy — correlation implies a causal relation. He is

starting with the idea that there must be some moral cause for punishment because people are punished for immoral acts. But this idea only works if you believe there is no God who can be in control of destiny. If there is no God or one who interferes in any way with what people do, then there is no destiny, no karma, etc. I don't think he wants to argue that there is no destiny and no karma, he just wants to argue that the free will of the jiva is very limited. But the problem with the morality causing punishment argument is that it only works if you completely discount karma and destiny. To give an example:

There are many people in prison who didn't commit the crimes they were convicted of. This is accepted as a problem with the legal systems of the world, people are wrongly convicted for some reason or another. They are being punished for something they didn't do. Is that moral or immoral? People who believe in karma say they are receiving their karma, their destiny was to go to prison for a crime they didn't commit. Even though if they have free will they didn't make the choice to do something immoral, still they are being punished as if they did. Where is the moral significance for their punishment if you believe in free will?

You can't start to use the morality and suffering argument in a debate about free will if you believe in past lives and karma, i.e. in a God who can and does interact with people's lives daily. Since you can't see and don't know what God knows about everyone, nor what they need to experience to satisfy God desires, you're not in a position to determine what is moral and just.

You can only argue for free will with the morality and suffering argument if you're also going to argue against karma and destiny, i.e. against God's direct interactions with us in our day to day lives. Only then can morality and punishment be argued as pro free will, e.g. the man was sent to prison because he chose to commit a crime; the man was unjustly sent to prison because someone chose to lie about him; the guilty man was acquitted because the prosecutor chose to accept a bribe.

All of those situations could also occur if it was a person's fate based on what God decided they needed to experience. Simply arguing like Kundali has done, that without free will morality and punishment make no sense, is a logical fallacy. If God takes part in people's destiny or karma, and samsara is true, then whatever people experience isn't necessarily going to be correlated to

what they have done in this life.

If he’s arguing that karma wouldn’t exist, that punishment would be immoral without free will, then he doesn’t understand karma. Karma isn’t about punishment, it’s about evolving our consciousness. What you experience, pain or pleasure, is what God decided you needed to experience to evolve. For people on lower levels of spiritual understanding karma is presented as action/reaction. But when they understand that God also teaches that he/she is in full control over everything and everyone, than karma is revealed as something different, it’s not based on action/reaction, it’s based on what God decides you need to experience to evolve to higher levels of consciousness.

The next essay was by Romapada Swami. He wrote:

> Our present material position has been determined by our past activities. This does not mean that we are like programmed robots without any free will. Within our present circumstances, we have some freedom – just as a tethered cow can move in a small circle. Depending on how we choose to act now, in accordance with the Supreme Lord’s laws or against His laws, we can get greater or lesser facilities thus binding ourselves further, or we can get totally liberated by fully surrendering to Him.

Notice he simply makes this statement without any reference from shastra, yet when says we are under Krishna’s control he does refer to shastra.

Romapada wrote:

> Because such souls have no desire to get out of material existence, they don’t. They don’t want Krsna’s mercy, and He doesn’t give it to them. According to Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana, Arjuna now asks Krsna: “People hearing this are going to want to give up these qualities. What can they do to accomplish this?” Krsna answers this question, and in this way presents us with our own choice either adopt demonic life and become degraded or reject it and obtain the supreme destination

These types of instructions are meant for people who don’t understand Krishna’s full message. The Gita and all shastra presents relative and absolute teachings. People on a lower level of spiritual understanding need to hear something which will raise them to higher levels, so shastra presents relative truths for them. Other people are more elevated and can understand absolute

truths, so shastra presents that for them. Bhavaprema quoted this series of verses from the Gita 12.8-12 the other day where we can see Krishna making this point:

> Just fix your mind on Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and engage all your intelligence in Me. Thus you will live in Me always, without a doubt.
>
> My dear Arjuna, O winner of wealth, if you cannot fix your mind on Me without deviation, then follow the regulative principles of bhakti-yoga. In this way develop a desire to attain Me.
>
> If you cannot practice the regulations of bhakti-yoga, then just try to work for Me, because by working for Me you will come to the perfect stage.
>
> If, however, you are unable to work in this consciousness of Me, then try to act giving up all results of your work and try to be self-situated.
>
> If you cannot take to this practice, then engage yourself in the cultivation of knowledge. Better than knowledge, however, is meditation, and better than meditation is renunciation of the fruits of action, for by such renunciation one can attain peace of mind.

Romapada said:

> Jiva Goswami, in his Paramatma Sandarbha, asks the question: “What is the root cause of the living entity’s having to experience material existence?” He reasons that, if we can fully understand this, we have the key to extracting ourselves from material life. Just run the same program in reverse! The answer he supplies is the soul’s aversion to Krishna ; in Sanskrit this is known as “bahir-mukha-jiva”, or “dvesa”, aversion to Krishna. See Srimad Bhagavatam 11.2.37. The remedial measure is now discovered!

I don’t see the connection to free will in that statement.

Romapada wrote:

> And fixing the mind… how to accomplish this most difficult task? Practice is required, but how can I attain sufficient driving force to maintain a sustained effort to control the mind?? I MUST CHOOSE TO EXERCISE MY FREE WILL PROPERLY. Then Hrsikesa will easily control His own energies.

> Relying on my effort alone, I cannot control the mind effectively.

I've written about this previously, see Final Fantasy

Romapada wrote:

> This aversion towards You is itself absolutely painful, and all that has followed only adds to the pain of this fundamental mistake. I now dedicate my very SELF unto You. You have given me the power of free will. Now I choose to properly direct myself towards Your service, exclusively! This is my determination.

Well, that isn't what is taught as the absolute truth in shastra. For people on a lower level of understanding some encouragement is given to try and control the mind, senses, etc. But then as they learn more they will understand they have no actual control of they do. See the link I mention above where I go into this topic. And it's not aversion to Krishna personally that is the cause of samsara, it's not like we were given the choice of living with Krishna in eternal bliss and happiness, or be separate from Krishna and suffer samsara — who would choose samsara and suffering? The aversion is our inability to deal with the truth of our existence, i.e. that we exist as a part of and are under the complete dominance and control — body and mind, of another person, eternally. It takes learning and time to be qualified to be able to deal with that reality in the way Krishna would like. Why? It's not easy to deal with it, at least at first. We have to completely give up our egotistic vision of reality and give ourselves fully to the dominance of another being. A person who is vastly superior and exists within us and as part of us, including being in control of everything we do, including our thoughts, if we want to exist in reality as opposed to a delusional state. It's normal to be averse to that until you learn how to deal with it.

In the movie *The Matrix*, Neo is looking for answers about what he has heard about the matrix, he is told that his life has been a lie, he is given the choice to accept the blue pill or the red pill. If he takes the blue pill he will forget about the matrix, if he takes the red pill then he will "stay in Wonderland" and Morpheus will "show (him how deep the rabbit hole goes." He takes the red pill and finds out that his entire existence hasn't been what he thought it was, it was actually a life where his real body was the captive of a computer and it's machines, and that his mind lived inside a computer generated virtual reality.

What he believed to be his body and society around him were all part of a computer controlled virtual world. We later find out that some people who are free from the matrix decide that they were happier in the matrix, they wanted to go back there and lose the knowledge of the truth — that they would be living in a computer generated virtual reality.

That is similar to the human condition. It takes time and learning for us to be able to handle the truth, except that our situation is the opposite of *The Matrix*. There, when they learn the truth they leave the matrix, the computer controlled virtual reality, only to return to fight the computer. For us, we will never leave the matrix, we just need to get used to it, and get used to the person who's the controller of our matrix-like reality. I go more into the virtual reality analogy at Through The Looking Glass

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6

Who's on first?

In the comments to the All Along The Watchtower post, there has been some discussion or even debate about the ontological position of Krishna vis-à-vis other Vishnu-tattva forms of God, starting with this comment from GM. This is my response to the discussion.

Malati, You wrote in your comment towards GM:

> If you don’t agree with our acharya’s realization and our, (CV devotees) realization that is alright, I would just request you to respect our realization; of course you are very welcome here, but I believe it would NOT be wise on your part to insists your sampradaya’s teachings on this site or debate ours.

That was in response to his saying:

> There is no difference between different forms of Krishna or Vishnu. If you see difference, then you don’t know who is Krishna or Vishnu. You won’t make this statement if you truly saw that all forms of God are one and same.
>
> I am Ram devotee. I was told that Krishna is source of Ram and Ram is not source of Krishna. This is wrong. Now, I see all forms of Vishna as same.

I don’t see any discrepancy with Chaitanya Vaishnavism in what GM wrote. As Seeker quotes from the Brahma-Samhita in his last comment: Gaudiya teachings are consistent in stating that all Vishnu-tattva personalities are the same.

I think sometimes due to translation problems, or improper communication from Indian gurus into languages other than their native tongue, subtle or

metaphoric teachings in shastra can be misinterpreted or miscommunicated to some degree. This current discussion is a modern classic example, which has become a cornerstone of modern Gaudiya teachings, even though it's sometimes missing the original metaphoric intent.

In ISKCON and from others it's common to hear them teach that Krishna is the source of all Vishnu forms. Malati quoted one of the verses, the most cited one, that forms the basis for that teaching, the *Bhagavatam* 1.3.28:

> ete camsa-kalah pumsah
> krsnas tu bhagavan svayam
> indrari-vyakulam lokam
> mrdayanti yuge yuge
>
> ete — all these; ca — and; amsa — plenary portions; kalah — portions of the plenary portions; pumsah — of the Supreme; krsnah — Lord Krsna; tu — but; bhagavan — the Personality of Godhead; svayam — in person; indra-ari — the enemies of Indra; vyakulam — disturbed; lokam — all the planets; mrdayanti — gives protection; yuge yuge — in different ages.
>
> All of the above-mentioned incarnations are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord, but Lord Sri Krsna is the original Personality of Godhead. All of them appear on planets whenever there is a disturbance created by the atheists. The Lord incarnates to protect the theists.

That is Prabhupada's translation, and as usual he takes some license with it. *Indrari*, Indra's enemies, refers to the *asuras*, who in Vedic literature would battle the devas for power. They weren't necessarily atheists. The verse isn't meant as an attack on atheists, nor to blame them enough that God would incarnate to "protect the theists." *Mrdayanti* is translated as "gives protection," although in every other instance in his books it's translated as "make happy." *Mrdayanti* comes from: **mRDayat**—*showing compassion, favouring*.

Prabhupada creates a conflict with atheists where there is none in the verse, blaming them for God needing to incarnate to "protect" against them. The verse instead says that God incarnates to show compassion and favour to the world, not that it needs to be protected from atheists. Especially considering that the prime message of the Bhagavat is that God is in complete and total

control over everyone and everything in existence, at all times—therefore the idea that the world is somehow being harmed by atheists, or by anyone or anything else, is contradictory to the teachings of shastra which has God 100% in control over everything.

Interestingly that sloka appears in his translation of *Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita* differently. Maybe the editors changed it? Both the word for word and the verse translation is different, and more correct:

From http://vedabase.net/cc/adi/2/67/en2

> ete — these; ca — and; amsa — plenary portions; kalah — parts of plenary portions; pumsah — of the purusa-avataras; krsnah — Lord Krsna; tu — but; bhagavan — the Supreme Personality of Godhead; svayam — Himself; indra-ari — the enemies of Lord Indra; vyakulam — full of; lokam — the world; mrdayanti — make happy; yuge yuge — at the right time in each age.
>
> All these incarnations of Godhead are either plenary portions or parts of the plenary portions of the purusa-avataras. But Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. In every age He protects the world through His different features when the world is disturbed by the enemies of Indra.

The second one is more accurate, but still adds an unnecessary “protects the world,” and omits “to show compassion and favour.” Either way the point of the verse from the *Bhagavatam* is in classifying Krishna in relation to every other type of avatar.

The verse is in reference to the previous verses in that chapter which cite many different famous avatars, from saktyavesa (shaktyavesha) avatars; to lila avatars; to manvantara avatars. Some are considered to be Vishnu-tattva (God), others are considered to be partially God, i.e. empowered by God for some specific purpose. The list ends with these two verses:

> avatara hy asankhyeya
> hareh sattva-nidher dvijah
> yathavidasinah kulyah
> sarasah syuh sahasrasah
>
> O brahmanas, the incarnations of the Lord are innumerable, like rivulets

flowing from inexhaustible sources of water.

rsayo manavo deva
manu-putra mahaujasah
kalah sarve harer eva
saprajapatayah smrtah

All the rsis, Manus, demigods and descendants of Manu, who are especially powerful, are plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord. This also includes the Prajapatis.

Why is Krishna being singled out as *Svayam Bhagavan*, God himself, when compared to other avatars? It seems to make more sense with some avatars than with others. Shaktyavesha avatars aren't God himself, but lila avatars like Rama, Nrsimhadeva, or Mohini, in fact are God himself/herself.

The problem is with the translation of *Bhagavan*. While it can mean God, the primary definition is: *one who possesses fortune*. In other words, the verse is saying: Krishna is the only one of all the manifestations of God who possesses all the fortune of all the other avatars.

Lila avatars like Rama, Matsya, or Kurma, are in fact the same being as Krishna. They are all Krishna himself. As Seeker pointed out in quoting Brahma Samhita:

dīpārcir eva hi daśāntaram abhyupetya
dīpāyate vivṛta-hetu-samāna-dharmā
yas tādṛg eva hi ca viṣṇutayā vibhāti
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

The light of one candle being communicated to other candles, although it burns separately in them, is the same in its quality. I adore the Primeval Lord Govinda who exhibits Himself equally in the same mobile manner in His various manifestations.

If various avatars are the same person as Krishna, why is Krishna being singled out as the only one who possesses all the fortune of all of them? For two main reasons:

1) Krishna is being emphasized over everyone else because of his teachings. His teachings are more complete and therefore more important than all the

rest.

2) Krishna's pastimes show more completely the full range of God's male personality and relationships than any other avatar.

Krishna is metaphorically *Svayam Bhagavan*, the possessor of all the qualities or fortune of all the other avatars. In reality all of the Vishnu-tattva (God himself) avatars possess all the qualities of Krishna, as is stated in the verse from Brahma Samhita above. But since Krishna is the only one of those avatars who displays all those qualities, he is therefore metaphorically said to be the only possessor of all those qualities.

Krishna is not literally the source of all the other avatars, as is often wrongly understood. He is metaphorically the source because he alone is displaying all of God's (male) personality. In other words: God has a certain complete personality, some of those personal qualities are displayed by various avatars, but only in Krishna are all of them displayed.

Gaudiya Vaishnavas often have arguments with other sampradayas or with Advaitins over these points. Gaudiya Vaishnavas will often argue that Krishna is the original source of all other avatars, quoting the above *Svayam Bhagavan* verse, or the īśvarah paramah krishnah verse from *Brahma-Samhita*. While the others will argue that all the avatars are either incarnations of Vishnu or Brahman. Both are right and wrong in their own way.

The reason Krishna isn't literally the source is because Krishna is non-different from his various Vishnu-tattva avatars. You can't literally be the source of yourself. Krishna can't literally be the source of Rama because they're the same person. The only difference is in bodily form, bodily activities, and display of personality. Metaphorically Krishna is the source because Krishna displays more of God's full potential personality.

Krishna can be metaphorically said to be an incarnation of Vishnu because Vishnu and Krishna are one and the same, non-different. In that light either can be an incarnation of either one. Krishna can be said to be an aspect of Vishnu: an *amsa* (part) or *kala* (part of part), because Vishnu contains Krishna, just as Krishna contains Vishnu—because they're the same person.

To give an example: If I work during the day digging ditches, and at night I go home and enjoy with my family, in both circumstances I'm the same person

with the same qualities. During my day job I contain within me the same qualities that I display when I go home at night. At night with my family I contain within me the same qualities that I display during my day job. In both circumstances the parts of me that aren't manifest still exist within me, they just aren't outwardly manifest. In that way Krishna can be said to be a partial incarnation of Vishnu, and Vishnu a partial incarnation of Krishna. The same person, displaying and hiding different parts of the same personality for different purposes.

The whole point of these teachings is to teach about God's various manifestations. Krishna is said to be the source and origin of all other avatars not because he is any different from them, but only because Krishna displays the most complete array of God's male personality characteristics. From *Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita* Madhya 23.67 and *Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu* 2.1.17:

> nayakanam siro-ratnam
> krsnas tu bhagavan svayam
> yatra nityataya sarve
> virajante maha-gunah
>
> He is the crown-jewel of all lovers, Krishna – Bhagavan himself; In him, all great qualities manifest perpetually.

Gaudiya Vaishnavism actually goes one esoteric step further than positing only Krishna as *Svayam Bhagavan*, but actually positing his female aspect, Sri Radhika, as supreme over Krishna—because of bhava (emotions) and rasa (flavor). They're taught as being one and the same supreme personality, in male and female forms:

From *Sri Caitanya Caritamrta* Adi 4.55:

> radha krsna-pranaya-vikrtir hladini saktir asmad
> ekatmanav api bhuvi pura deha-bhedam gatau tau
> caitanyakhyam prakatam adhuna tad-dvayam caikyam aptam radha-bhava-dyuti-suvalitam naumi krsna-svarupam
>
> radha — Srimati Radharani; krsna — of Lord Krsna; pranaya — conduct, display; vikrtih — the transformation; hladini saktih — pleasure potency; asmat — from this; eka-atmanau — both the same in identity; api — although; bhuvi — on earth; pura — formerly; deha-bhedam — separate

forms; gatau — arrived; tau — those two; caitanya-akhyam — known as Sri Caitanya; prakatam — manifest; adhuna — now; tat-dvayam — the two of Them; ca — and; aikyam — unity; aptam — obtained; radha — of Srimati Radharani; bhava — emotion; dyuti — splendour; su-valitam — who is adorned with; naumi — I offer my obeisances; krsna-svarupam — appearing in the form of Krsna.

Radha Krishna's display is a transformation of the pleasure potency. Although Radha and Krishna are one in their identity, formerly they arrived in two different forms on earth. Now that pair has united. I offer my obeisances to that manifestation known as Chaitanya – appearing in the form of Krishna – with the emotional splendour of Srimati Radharani.

Still, although Radha and Krishna are the same person, she is considered the supreme enjoyer of the two:

Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta Adi 4 133-136

I taste the bliss to which the object of love is entitled. But the pleasure of Rādhā, the abode of that love, is ten million times greater.

My mind races to taste the pleasure experienced by the abode, but I cannot taste it, even by My best efforts. How may I taste it?

If sometime I can be the abode of that love, only then may I taste its joy.

Thinking in this way, Lord Kṛṣṇa was curious to taste that love. His eager desire for that love increasingly blazed in His heart.

From *Sri Caitanya Caritamrta* Madhya-lila Chapter 8 Verse 149

aparikalita-pūrvaḥ kaś camatkāra-kārī
sphurati mama garīyān eṣa mādhurya-pūraḥ
ayam aham api hanta prekṣya yaḿ lubdha-cetāḥ
sa-rabhasam upabhoktuḿ kāmaye rādhikeva

aparikalita-pūrvaḥ — not previously experienced; kaḥ — who; camatkāra-kārī — causing wonder; sphurati — manifests; mama — My; garīyān — more great; eṣaḥ — this; mādhurya-pūraḥ — abundance of sweetness; ayam — this; aham — I; api — even; hanta — alas; prekṣya — seeing; yam — which; lubdha-cetāḥ — My mind being bewildered; sa-rabhasam — impetuously; upabhoktum — to enjoy; kāmaye — desire; rādhikā iva —

like Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

(Upon seeing His own reflection in a bejeweled pillar of His Dvārakā palace, Kṛṣṇa desired to embrace it, saying): “Who manifests an abundance of sweetness greater than Mine, which has never been experienced before and which causes wonder to all? Alas, I Myself, My mind bewildered on seeing this beauty, impetuously desires to enjoy it like Radhika

Radha and Krishna are described here by Raghava Goswami (intimate associate of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu) in his *Sri Krsna-bhakti-ratna Prakasa*

This is also described in the Vishnu-dharma Purana, Uttara-khanda:

“Because They are both full of eternity, knowledge, and bliss, They are not different. The statement that They have two distinct bodies is a metaphor only.”

In this way Radha is manifest from Krishna’s form. Why, then, are there two forms? The Narada-pancaratra explains:

“Becoming many to please Her, the sweet Lord enjoyed with His sweet beloved, who manifested one form only.”

The beloved in this quote is Radha. The passage in Govinda-Vrindavana-shastra that begins: “Radha was born from half of Krishna’s body,” I will later quote in full. Then this point will be made clear.

(…)

That Sri Radha is manifested from half of Lord Krsna’s body is also described in the Govinda-Vrndavana-sastra, where Sri Krsna says to Balarama:

“O Balarama, please listen and I will tell You something. One day, taking My flute, My heart full of bliss and My form bending in three places, I went under a kadamba tree and, seeing My own form reflected in a splendid golden platform studded with jewels, I became enchanted. At that moment My heart became filled with the sweet happiness known as conjugal love, which charms the entire world. My heart now desires to become a woman. I yearn to enjoy Myself as a woman.

As the Lord thought in this way, His heart approached itself. From the sweetness of His heart came bliss and from the bliss came Himself, manifested in a second form, a female form of transcendental bliss that could experience the direct perception of Himself.

At that time a goddess, whose form was nectar, whose fair complexion was like a host of lightning flashes, and who was decorated with glittering ornaments, appeared from the Lord’s left side. She is known as Radha, who is half of Krsna’s body, and who is the mistress of all potencies.”

This is also described in Sri Krsna-yamala, Patala 114, where Tripura says to Lord Vasudeva

“In the word aum, the letter a stands for Sri Krsna. The letter u stands for Sri Radhika, the original potency, who manifested from the Lord’s desire. The letter m stands for the lotus feet of this divine couple.”

This is also described in the Govinda-Vrndavana-sastra, where Lord Krsna says to Balarama:

“My beloved Radhika is the form of My three transcendental potencies. As I am beyond the touch of matter, so is She, whose form is My potency.

Manifest in three forms, I am transcendental, My form is beyond the touch of the three modes of matter. I am the master of everything, and She is the mistress of this master of everything. She is said to be the kriya-sakti. She has the same sweetness as the other two saktis."

That Radha is manifested from half of Lord Krsna’s form, and that She is the personification of all transcendental potencies is described in the Sammohana-tantra, where Narada Muni prays:

“O wonderfully opulent one, it is difficult for even Brahma, Siva, and all the demigods to access you, who are You? You never touch the path of the great yogis meditation.

The potencies iccha-sakti, jnana-sakti and kriya-sakti, are tiny parts of parts of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Whatever inconceivable potencies are the property of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Visnu, the handsome master of all

potencies, they are all the expansions of your expansions.”

In this way it may be concluded that all potencies of the Lord are manifested from Sri Radha.

Because Shri Shri Radha-Krishna are not different and because Shri Krishna is the master of all potencies, therefore Shri Radha is also the master and source of all potencies. He is by nature full of sweetness and bliss, free from the three modes, and eternally manifest beyond the material nature. Because Radha is not different from Him, so is She also. It is said that within the Lord are all potencies, the modes, and the material nature.

≈

7

See me, feel me

Even though the teachings of the Gita and the Bhagavatam ask us to see Krishna in everything we encounter, still most sadhakas see the world around them as a manifestation of mahamaya. Thus in their epistemological view of the reality they experience all around them, it's all without soteriological ontological value unless it is directly physically related to bhakti. The message of the Bhagavata exhorts us to see Krishna in all of our experiences in this world. Krishna tells us we should adopt a worldview wherein God is seen as the substance and controller of reality, therefore enabling us to be in communion with God at all times through all we experience.

Neophytes and even madhyama adhikaris usually believe and teach that only through meditation on Harinam, shastra, etc, can we be in communion with God. They see a distinct duality in their real world experience. There is the world of mahamaya and there is the world of bhakti. Whatever is going on outside of bhakti is maya, and therefore of no value and should be avoided. You can see that ontological worldview in the attitudes of some of the commentators here to the videos I post. They see them as without value because they are not directly about Krishna or bhakti. A better educated and realized vaisnava will understand that since Krishna is in control over everyone and everything – that everything is related to Krishna.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.29.20-23

> yathā vāta-ratho ghrāṇam
> āvṛṅkte gandha āśayāt
> evaṁ yoga-rataṁ ceta

ātmānam avikāri yat

yathā — as; vāta — of air; rathaḥ — the chariot; ghrāṇam — sense of smell; āvṛṅkte — catches; gandhaḥ — aroma; āśayāt — from the source; evam — similarly; yoga-ratam — engaged in devotional service; cetaḥ — consciousness; ātmānam — the Supreme Soul; avikāri — unchanging; yat — which.

As the chariot of air carries an aroma from its source and immediately catches the sense of smell, similarly, one who constantly engages in devotional service, in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, can catch the Supreme Soul, who is equally present everywhere.

That sloka is mistranslated but gets the point partially across, yoga-ratam doesn't mean one who constantly engages in devotional service, it means someone who is immersed in yogic awareness, someone who has the vision of seeing everything united, yoga, with God, can perceive the constant presence of God – just like smelling an aroma wafting through the air.

ahaṁ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
bhūtātmāvasthitaḥ sadā
tam avajñāya māṁ martyaḥ
kurute 'rcā-viḍambanam

I am present in every living entity as the Supersoul. If someone neglects or disregards that Supersoul everywhere and engages himself in the worship of the Deity in the temple, that is simply imitation.

yo māṁ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
santam ātmānam īśvaram
hitvārcāṁ bhajate mauḍhyād
bhasmany eva juhoti saḥ

One who worships the Deity of Godhead in the temples but does not know that the Supreme Lord, as Paramātmā, is situated in every living entity's heart, must be in ignorance and is compared to one who offers oblations into ashes.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.28.42,44

sarva-bhūteṣu cātmānaṁ

sarva-bhūtāni cātmani
īkṣetānanya-bhāvena
bhūteṣv iva tad-ātmatām

A yogi should see the same soul in all manifestations, for all that exists is a manifestation of different energies of the Supreme. In this way the devotee should see all living entities without distinction. That is realization of the Supreme Soul.

tasmād imāṁ svāṁ prakṛtiṁ
daivīṁ sad-asad-ātmikām
durvibhāvyāṁ parābhāvya
svarūpeṇāvatiṣṭhate

Thus the yogī can be in the self-realized position after conquering the insurmountable spell of māyā, who presents herself as both the cause and effect of this material manifestation and is therefore very difficult to understand.

Mahamaya and yogamaya are two sides of the same coin. Mahamaya exists for people who are deluded by avidya [spiritual ignorance]. They exist in the world of mahamaya. We are told that Bhagavan [God] has three energetic tranformations: **chit-shakti** — also called antaranga-shakti or swarupa-shakti [transcendental energy]; **jiva-shakti** — also called tatastha-shakti [human souls]; **maya-shakti** — also called jada-shakti or bahiranga-shakti [mundane energy].

Often people mistake shakti to be a substance. For example: devotees usually believe that maya-shakti is matter (atoms, molecules, elements, etc), and therefore in Vaikuntha there is no matter because maya-shakti is said not to exist there, only chit-shakti exists in Vaikuntha.

What they don’t understand is that maya-shakti is conceptual and conditional. It’s not a substance — it’s a quality of a substance. That quality is determined by our conception of the substance. For example: After you offer food in a ritual to Bhagavan it’s considered to be transformed into chit-shakti — even though it’s comprised of the same atoms, molecules and elements. Anything is chit-shakti if it’s seen as having a transcendental purpose or connection.

In *Jaiva Dharma* Bhaktivinoda Thakura wrote:

Advaita: My brother, Digambara, please don’t be angry. You have come to see me after such a long time, and I want to satisfy you. Is it a slight to speak of visnu-maya? Bhagavan Visnu is the embodiment of supreme consciousness, and He is the one supreme controller of all. Everything that exists is His potency (shakti). Potency is not an independent object (vastu), but rather the functional power inherent within an object (vastu-dharma). To say that shakti (potency) is the root of everything is thoroughly opposed to tattva, metaphysical truth. Shakti cannot exist independent of the object from which it originates. We must first accept the existence of an object that possesses full spiritual consciousness, otherwise accepting shakti by itself is like dreaming of a flower in the sky.

The commentary on Vedanta states, sakti-saktimator abhedah:“There is no difference between the potency and the possessor of potency.” This means that shakti is not a separate object. The Supreme Person who is the master of all potencies is the one truly abiding substance. Shakti is the quality, or inherent function, that is subordinate to His will. You have said that shakti is the embodiment of consciousness, that it possesses will, and that it is beyond the influence of the three qualities of material nature. This is correct, but only insofar as shakti operates fully under the support of a pure conscious entity, and is thus considered identical with that powerful entity. Will and consciousness depend on the Supreme Being. Will cannot exist in shakti; rather, shakti acts in accordance with the will of the Supreme Being. You have the power to move, and by your will to move, that power will act. To say “the power is moving” is merely a figure of speech; it actually means that the person who possesses that power is moving.

Bhagavan has only one sakti, which is manifest in different forms. When it functions in a spiritual capacity, it is known as cit-sakti, and when it operates in a material capacity, it is known as maya, or jada-sakti. It is stated in the Svetasvatara Upanisad (6.8), parasya saktir vividhaiva sruyate, “The Vedas say that Bhagavan’s divine sakti is full of variety.”

The sakti that supports the three modes of material nature –sattva, rajah, and tamah – is known as jada-sakti, and its functions are to create and destroy the universe. The Puranas and the Tantra refer to it as visnu-

maya, mahamaya, maya, and so on. There are many allegorical descriptions of her activities. For example, it is said that she is the mother of Brahma, Visnu, and Siva, and that she slew the demoniac brothers Sumbha and Nisumbha. The living entity remains under the control of this sakti as long as he is engrossed in material enjoyment. When the jiva is endowed with pure knowledge, he becomes aware of his own svarupa, and this awareness enables him to transcend maya-sakti and attain the liberated status. He then comes under the control of cit-sakti and obtains spiritual happiness.

Digambara: Are you not under the control of some power?

Advaita: Yes, we are jiva-sakti. We have abandoned maya-sakti and come under the protection of cit-sakti.

Digambara: Then you are also a sakta.

Advaita: Yes, the Vaisnavas are true saktas. We are under the control of Sri Radhika, who is the embodiment of cit-sakti. It is only under Her shelter that we render service to Krsna, so who is more of a sakta than the Vaisnavas? We do not see any difference between the Vaisnavas and the real saktas. Those who are only attached to maya-sakti, without taking shelter of cit-sakti, may be called saktas, but they are not Vaisnavas; they are only materialists. In the Narada-pancaratra, Sri Durga Devi explains:

tava vaksasi radhaham rase vrndavane vane

In the forest known as Vrndavana, I am Your internal sakti, Sri Radhika, who adorns Your chest in the rasa dance.

From this statement of Durga Devi, it is clear that there is only one sakti, not two. That sakti is Radhika when She manifests as the internal potency, and she is Durga when she is manifested as the external potency. In the condition of freedom from contact with the material modes of nature, visnu-maya is the cit-sakti. That same visnu-maya is the jada-sakti when it is endowed with the modes of nature.

In the Vishnu Purana we find:

viṣṇu-śaktiḥ parā proktā

kṣetra-jñākhyā tathā parā
avidyā-karma-saṁjñānyā
tṛtīyā śaktir iṣyate

viṣṇu-śaktiḥ — the internal potency of Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead; parā — spiritual; proktā — said; kṣetra-jña — the living entities; ākhyā — known as; tathā — also; parā — spiritual; avidyā — nescience, or godlessness; karma — and fruitive activities; saṁjñā — known as; anyā — another; tṛtīyā — third; śaktiḥ — potency; iṣyate — is accepted as.

The internal potency of the Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu, is spiritual, as verified by the śāstras. There is another spiritual potency, known as kṣetra-jña, or the living entity. The third potency, which is known as nescience, makes the living entity godless and fills him with fruitive activity.

In the above sloka jada-shakti is identified with avidya, nescience, not with a substance. Jada-shakti exists as a conceptual reality based on a conditional perspective by the jiva. If a jiva is deluded by avidya, then the jiva lives in the mahamaya or jada-shakti world, the material world. When the jiva is liberated from avidya, by knowledge of the Lord’s 100% presence and control over everything, then the jiva lives in the yogamaya or chit-shakti world, the spiritual world. Kapila teaches this conception in Srimad Bhagavatam.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.26.23-25

mahat-tattvād vikurvāṇād
bhagavad-vīrya-sambhavāt
kriyā-śaktir ahaṅkāras
tri-vidhaḥ samapadyata

vaikārikas taijasaś ca
tāmasaś ca yato bhavaḥ
manasaś cendriyāṇāṁ ca
bhūtānāṁ mahatām api

The material ego springs up from the mahat-tattva, which evolved from the Lord’s own energy. The material ego is endowed predominantly with active power of three kinds — good, passionate and ignorant. It is from these three types of material ego that the mind, the senses of

perception, the organs of action, and the gross elements evolve.

sahasra-śirasaḿ sākṣād
yam anantaḿ pracakṣate
sańkarṣaṇākhyaḿ puruṣaḿ
bhūtendriya-manomayam

The threefold ahańkāra, the source of the gross elements, the senses and the mind, is identical with them because it is their cause. It is known by the name of Sańkarṣaṇa, who is directly Lord Ananta with a thousand heads.

Ahankara or misconception of self and reality is the cause of the “material” world. What is that misconception?

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.26.26

kartṛtvaḿ karaṇatvaḿ ca
kāryatvaḿ ceti lakṣaṇam
śānta-ghora-vimūḍhatvam
iti vā syād ahańkṛteḥ

This false ego is characterized as the doer, as an instrument and as an effect. It is further characterized as serene, active or dull according to how it is influenced by the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance.

Ahankara creates the “material” world by causing the jiva to see itself and the world around it to be acting and existing independently from the control of Krishna. The jiva then misconceives the nature of the mind:

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.26.27

vaikārikād vikurvāṇān
manas-tattvam ajāyata
yat-sańkalpa-vikalpābhyāḿ
vartate kāma-sambhavaḥ

From the false ego of goodness, another transformation takes place. From this evolves the mind, whose thoughts and reflections give rise to desire.

From ahankara also arises identification with the mind. In this way the mind of jiva is considered to be material because the jiva misconceives the nature of

the mind to be itself or under its control, due to avidya. In reality the mind is not part of the jiva, nor under the control of the jiva, nor is it material.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.26.28

> yad vidur hy aniruddhākhyaṁ
> hṛṣīkāṇām adhīśvaram
> śāradendīvara-śyāmaṁ
> saṁrādhyaṁ yogibhiḥ śanaiḥ
>
> The mind of the living entity is known by the name of Lord Aniruddha, the supreme ruler of the senses. He possesses a bluish-black form resembling a lotus flower growing in the autumn. He is found slowly by the yogīs.

When liberated from ahankara and avidya the material nature of the mind disappears and in its place the mind's true nature is revealed as a manifestation of Krishna.

Srimad Bhagavatam 3.28.35-36

> muktasrayam yarhi nirvisayam viraktam
> nirvanam rcchati manah sahasa yatharcih
> atmanam atra puruso 'vyavadhanam ekam
> anviksate pratinivrtta-guna-pravahah
>
> mukta-asrayam — situated in liberation; yarhi — at which time; nirvisayam — detached from sense objects; viraktam — indifferent; nirvanam — extinction; rcchati — obtains; manah — the mind; sahasa — immediately; yatha — like; arcih — the flame; atmanam — the mind; atra — at this time; purusah — a person; avyavadhanam — without separation; ekam — one; anviksate — experiences; pratinivrtta — freed; guna-pravahah — from the flow of material qualities.
>
> When the mind is thus completely freed from all material contamination and detached from material objectives, it is just like the flame of a lamp. At that time the mind is actually dovetailed with that of the Supreme Lord and is experienced as one with Him because it is freed from the interactive flow of the material qualities.
>
> so 'py etaya caramaya manaso nivrttya

tasmin mahimny avasitah sukha-duhkha-bahye
hetutvam apy asati kartari duhkhayor yat
svatman vidhatta upalabdha-paratma-kasthah

sah — the yogi; api — moreover; etaya — by this; caramaya — ultimate; manasah — of the mind; nivrttya — by cessation of material reaction; tasmin — in his; mahimni — ultimate glory; avasitah — situated; sukha-duhkha-bahye — outside of happiness and distress; hetutvam — the cause; api — indeed; asati — a product of ignorance; kartari — in the false ego; duhkhayoh — of pleasure and pain; yat — which; sva-atman — to his own self; vidhatte — he attributes; upalabdha — realized; para-atma — of the Personality of Godhead; kasthah — the highest truth.

Thus situated in the highest transcendental stage, the mind ceases from all material reaction and becomes situated in its own glory, transcendental to all material conceptions of happiness and distress. At that time the yogi realizes the truth of his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He discovers that pleasure and pain as well as their interactions, which he attributed to his own self, are actually due to the false ego, which is a product of ignorance.

I don’t see “dovetailed” in the word for word in the first verse, that's an addition, it should just say: the mind is experienced as one with, or without separation from God, from *avyavadhanam*. The idea is that when liberated from avidya (ignorance) and the influence of ahankara (false conception of self), the mind is then experienced as a manifestation of Krishna, as non-separate from Krishna. The jiva no longer identifies with the mind or considers the mind to be under his or her control. The jiva’s true relationship with the mind is revealed, and through that the devotee enters into a direct relationship with the Lord.

Brahma Samhita 5.38

premanjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena
santah sadaiva hrdayesu vilokayanti
yam syamasundaram acintya-guna-svarupam
govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami

prema–of love; anjana–with the salve; churita–tinged; bhakti–of devotion;

vilocanena–with the eye; santah–the pure devotees; sada–always; eva–indeed; hrdayesu–in their hearts; vilokayanti–see; yam–whom; syama–dark blue; sundaram–beautiful; acintya–inconceivable; guna–with attributes; svarupam–whose nature is endowed; govindam–Govinda; adi-purusam–the original person; tam–Him; aham–I; bhajami–worship.

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is Syamasundara, Krsna Himself with inconceivable innumerable attributes, whom the pure devotees see in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion tinged with the salve of love.

The basic point I'm trying to get across is that the "material" world is created by avidya and ahankara. When the jiva is conditioned by the three gunas then the jiva lives under the spell of mahamaya in the "material" world of gross and subtle elements. Everything is seen disconnected from Krishna; everyone is seen acting under his or her own will power. Therefore the devotee doesn't see Krishna everywhere. The devotee doesn't see the presence of Krishna anywhere other than in the temple or in bhakti related activities. When the jiva is free from avidya and ahankara and realizes that everything is nothing more than a manifestation of Krishna's control, then the jiva lives under yogamaya in the "spiritual" world. The devotee sees Krishna's total control over everything and therefore experiences Krishna's presence everywhere.

Krishna says:

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.28.6-7

The Supersoul alone is the ultimate controller and creator of this world, and thus He alone is also the created. Similarly, the Soul of all existence Himself both maintains and is maintained, withdraws and is withdrawn. No other entity can be properly ascertained as separate from Him, the Supreme Soul, who nonetheless is distinct from everything and everyone else. The appearance of the threefold material nature, which is perceived within Him, has no actual basis. Rather, you should understand that this material nature, composed of the three modes, is simply the product of His illusory potency.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.13.24

Within this world, whatever is perceived by the mind, speech, eyes or other senses is Me alone and nothing besides Me. All of you please understand this

by a straightforward analysis of the facts.

8

Here, there, and everywhere

Srimad Bhagavatam 3.29.20

yathā vāta-ratho ghrāṇam
āvṛṅkte gandha āśayāt
evaṁ yoga-rataṁ ceta
ātmānam avikāri yat

As the chariot of air carries an aroma from its source and immediately catches the sense of smell, similarly, one who has the vision of seeing everything united with God [yoga-ratam], can catch the Supreme Soul, who is equally present everywhere.

This is a response to Malati’s comment on the Mind Games post.

She was postulating, along with John, that Vedic scriptures teach us that Krishna (God) is aloof from this world; that karma and nature doesn’t need Krishna to function; that it’s all going on like an automated machine; and that we act through our own free will. John went further and claimed that since it’s stated that Krishna never leaves Vrindavan, that God is therefore personally absent from our world. First is my response to John:

You don’t have a good understanding of what Krishna teaches about his presence and control of this world. Krishna never leaves Vrindavan in the sense that lila is eternal, not that God doesn’t exist everywhere else, Krishna is always in Vrindavan, he is also always in every atom. The “material energy” doesn’t exist independent of Krishna.

Krishna says:

Bhagavad Gita 6.30

For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me

From Bhaktivinoda Thakura's *Sri Tattva Sutra*:

7. tacchaktitastatvadhikyamiticcenna tadabhedat

If someone claims, "The Lord is different from His potency", then I reply, "No. It is not so, for they are not different."

If someone claims that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the creator of the worlds, is different from His potency, then this sutra is spoken to refute him. Because the Supreme Personality of Godhead is not different from His many potencies, the potencies are not different from Him. This is described in the following words of the Nyaya-sastra:

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead, the master of all potencies, is not different from His potencies."

In the Svetasvatara Upanisad (6.8.) it is said:

"The Lord's potencies of knowledge, power and action share His own nature. They are not different from Him."

In Visnu Purana (1.22.53) it is said:

"Just as the illumination of a fire, which is situated in one place, is spread over, the energies of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Parabrahman, are spread all over the universe."

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.27.11-12

A liberated soul realizes the Absolute Personality of Godhead, who is transcendental and who is manifest as a reflection even in the false ego. He is the support of the material cause and He enters into everything. He is absolute, one without a second, and He is the eyes of the illusory energy.

The presence of the Supreme Lord can be realized just as the sun is realized first as a reflection on water, and again as a second reflection on the wall of a room, although the sun itself is situated in the sky.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.2.41

A devotee should not see anything as being separate from the Supreme

> Personality of Godhead, Krsna. Ether, fire, air, water, earth, the sun and other luminaries, all living beings, the directions, trees and other plants, the rivers and oceans – whatever a devotee experiences he should consider to be an expansion of Krsna. Thus seeing everything that exists within creation as the body of the Supreme Lord, Hari, the devotee should offer his sincere respects to the entire expansion of the Lord's body.

Also see See me, feel me.

Malati commented and said:

> I agree with John that Krishna is aloof from the goings-on in the material world, (this is classic conclusion from all followers of the universal Hindu faith) in so far as John sees that what's happening in the material world is some kind of a process governed by the law of karma and within the meta-law of karma is the law of nature, otherwise known as the law of physics.
>
> The law of nature, for example, the second law of thermodynamics is the expression of the universal principle of decay observable in nature—like the process a jiva undergoes – birth, growth and death.
>
> Krishna is aloof in the sense that he has the law of karma and law of nature "deputized on his behalf" to take care of this aspect of the jiva's existence.

This is my response:

Vedanta doesn't suggest that God is aloof from this world, all those verses I quoted suggest the opposite, and there are countless more. Karma is just one aspect of this world, God is intimately involved in all aspects of our world. Nature may work according to laws, but everything going on in nature is pervaded by, comprised of, and controlled by God. Karma is not automated like a machine let loose, it needs a conscious awareness and control to make it function at every second. Krishna states in the Gita:

> mayadhyakshena prakritih / suyate sa-caracaram
> hetunanena kaunteya / jagad viparivarttate
>
> **Prakriti [nature] works under my supervision**, mayadhyakshena

prakritih, **manifesting all created things**, suyate sa-caracaram. **This is how the universe works son of Kunti**, hetunanena kaunteya jagad viparivarttate.

prakrityaiva ca karmani / kriyamanani sarvasah
yah pasyati tathatmanam / akarttaram sa pasyati

All activities taking place, in all respects, are performed by prakriti, prakrtyaiva ca karmani kriyamanani sarvasah. **Who sees**, yah pasyati, **that the atma is not the doer**, atmanam akarttaram, **he sees**, sah pasyati.

That is why Bhaktivinoda states in his *Jaiva Dharma*:

> Potency (sakti) is not an independent object (vastu), but rather the functional power inherent within an object (vastu-dharma). To say that sakti (potency) is the root of everything is thoroughly opposed to tattva, metaphysical truth. Sakti cannot exist independent of the object from which it originates. We must first accept the existence of an object that possesses full spiritual consciousness, otherwise accepting sakti by itself is like dreaming of a flower in the sky. The commentary on Vedanta states, sakti-saktimator abhedah: There is no difference between the potency and the possessor of potency. This means that sakti is not a separate object. The Supreme Person who is the master of all potencies is the one truly abiding substance.

What he is saying is that Krishna is both shaktiman and shakti, God is energy and the controller of that self-same energy, and that you can't have shakti without shaktiman because shakti and shaktiman are one substance — wherever there is shakti there is shaktiman, you cannot separate the controlling aspect of God from the energy aspect. The often used analogy in Vedanta is fire: you cannot have fire without heat and light, the fire itself is the controlling aspect while the heat and light is the energy aspect.

What Bhaktivinoda is trying to get across is that our every move and our every thought is dependent on the ability of God to do it for us because we have no inherent ability to do anything on our power. Shaktiman is the possessor of shakti, the controlling aspect of shakti. He uses the analogy of a person who moves their body to teach on the nature of shaktiman and shakti: the body is

comparable to shakti, energy; and the person in the body is comparable to shaktiman, the controller of the energy. When the body moves you don't say "that person's body is moving" you say "that person is moving." That is why Krishna says:

> isvarah sarva-bhutanam / hrid-dese 'rjuna tishthati
> bhramayan sarva-bhutani / yantrarudhani mayaya
>
> **The supreme controller is at the heart of all beings Arjuna**, isvarah sarva-bhutanam hrid-dese 'rjuna tishthati, **motivating the movements of all living beings**, bhramayan sarva-bhutani, **who are mounted on the machine of his universal potency**, yantrarudhani mayaya.

Material nature is functioning like a machine, but it functions like a car functions — it needs a driver, someone to control it. Visvanath Chakravarti Thakura compares us to puppets in his commentary to that verse:

> The srutis also state: "Sri Narayana pervades whatever is seen or heard in this universe, whatever is within or beyond it." From these Vedic statements, it is established that Isvara is situated within the heart as Antaryami. What does He do there? In response to this, Sri Bhagavan says, "He makes all the jivas wander within this material world by His maya-sakti, engaging them in various activities." Just as a puppeteer maneuvers puppets that are mounted on a platform by a device which controls the threads, similarly, maya controls all the jivas in a particular way.

It's not that maya-shakti functions as a separate consciousness from Krishna: it is the energy, Krishna is the consciousness controlling that energy. Again the example Bhaktivinoda uses is that of a person and his body, you may say the body is moving, but what you really mean is that the person is moving the body, not that the body is an automaton moving on it's own accord. Similarly, as Bhaktivinoda states, shakti cannot move or do anything without some power which moves it, shakti has no will of it's own different from Krishna, Krishna is the will, the controlling aspect inherent in shakti:

> We must first accept the existence of an object that possesses full spiritual consciousness, otherwise accepting sakti by itself is like dreaming of a flower in the sky. The commentary on Vedanta states,

> sakti-saktimator abhedah: There is no difference between the potency and the possessor of potency. This means that sakti is not a separate object. The Supreme Person who is the master of all potencies is the one truly abiding substance. Sakti is the quality, or inherent function, that is subordinate to His will.

See the following link to see that Vedanta and common sense teaches us that we do not have free will, we are always 100% dependent on God for everything we think we control:

From Krishna in the Gita and Bhagavatam:

> **All activities taking place, in all respects, are performed by prakriti [under My direction]; who sees the atma is not the doer — he sees.**
>
> **Within this world, whatever is perceived by the mind, speech, eyes or other senses is Me alone and nothing besides Me. All of you please understand this by a straightforward analysis of the facts.**

And also see

Inconceivably we're one but not the same.

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9

Heaven is a place on earth

This is a response to John’s comment on the Here, There and Everywhere post:

I know you don’t believe in any of the stuff you just wrote anymore, still, just to let you know — that while you have outlined some teachings you remember from long ago, the reality is that many teachings from Vedanta aren’t meant to be taken literally, especially in the Bhagavatam and Brahma-Samhita. For example what you wrote about Shiva being the “lord of maya or matter” — in that same Brahma Samhita it also postulates Durga as the predominant deity of the material world; and elsewhere we can find that Paramatma Vishnu is said to be the predominant controller of the material world — all of these are true in different ways, some literally, i.e. Paramatma; some metaphorically, i.e. Durga and Shiva.

Shiva tattva and Durga tattva are highly metaphoric, according to Jiva Goswami in his *Paramatma Sandarbha* there are two types of Shiva:

Sometimes Shiva represents the jiva on attaining liberation, e.g. Shiva as the “destroyer” of the material world — on liberation for the jivan-mukta, the “material world” is metaphorically “destroyed.” The jivan-mukta (equivalent to bhava-bhakti in Gaudiya Vaishnava soteriology) has awakened to God’s presence and control over everything in existence; no longer is the world seen as separate from God; the jivan-mukta experiences God’s presence through everyone and everything, especially within him/herself.

The “material world” vanishes because the material world is purely conceptual, i.e. you only live in the material world as long as you are conditioned by ahankara (false designation and perception of reality and ego). The “material world” and the “spiritual” world exist in the same physical space, the difference

is the consciousness of the person, e.g. beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Shiva's abode is said to be Shiva-loka, which is said to be not quite Vaikuntha, it's a "spiritual world," but not quite to the very highest level. The stage of jivan-mukta, or liberated while still in your present body, is where the jiva is fully self-realized and relating directly with God, but still establishing that relationship; evolving that relationship till the point where he or she is ready to physically live in a direct relationship with God on the very highest level (in Gaudiya Vaishnava soteriology that's called prema-bhakti).

Shiva also sometimes represents, with Durga, the shakti and shaktiman manifestation of Lakshmi Narayana or Radha Krishna in the material world, i.e. the power and the powerful. Although they are all one and the same all pervading supreme being, these different tattvas are explaining God in different ways to make different metaphorical points about the nature of God and our world.

You may want to look at this post See me, feel me for more on how ahankara creates the "material world" and how the spiritual world and material world are conceptual and conditional to the perception of the jiva.

You also mentioned Gita verse 9.4, which Prabhupada translates (or maybe he borrowed the translation like so many of those in his Gita from Dr. Radhakrishnan) incorrectly as:

> By Me, in My unmanifested form, this entire universe is pervaded. All beings are in Me, but I am not in them.

You said:

> Have any of you come across the verse in the gita where Krishna says everything is in him but he is not in them? After that He said behold my mystic opulence. We know that Krishna also said in the Bhagavad Gita that he is situated in everything that exists. What is he trying to say? He is in this regard saying that all though there are many many forms of the Godhead, they are one and same in him. He opened his mouth to mother Yashoda and in it was all the universes. Everything. But that very form of Govinda does not exist in everything yet Krishna exists in everything in the material world as kshirodakashayi Vishnu and exists in everything and all paraphernalia in the spiritual world as Baladev.

That isn’t what Krishna meant. That verse is commonly misunderstood, it doesn’t mean to suggest that Krishna “isn’t in” us, nor is it meant to suggest that “the form of Govinda does not exist in everything,” as you suggest.

That verse is tricky because of the word *avasthita*. In Prabhupada’s translation he says it simply means “inside” and in the transliteration he has it as “situated.” Both are wrong. Avasthita means “having its place or abode,” with the specific connotation of something which is contained in one place, resides only there, like a jiva soul in a body. This is a more correct translation:

> This whole world is pervaded by Me in My unmanifest form. All beings exist in Me, but I am not contained in them!

Krishna is saying that he isn’t contained by us. Why does he need to say that he isn’t contained by us? Because elsewhere he says he resides within us, as antaryami (literally — kept within). In this verse he is making the point that it’s not like he only exists within us, and that everywhere else and in everything else surrounding us God is absent. In this verse Krishna is saying:

“I may be within you, but I am not contained by you, rather, you are contained in me, I am all-pervading and you exist within me.”

Then in the next verse Krishna says that the world isn’t within him! But in that next verse he also says that although he exists everywhere, he is the source of and outside of this world. Krishna doesn’t mean we don’t actually exist within him, he is just making a point that just because we exist within him, that isn’t meant to suggest that this world is all there is of Krishna — the verse is a refutation of pantheism, which posits God as identical with our universe. Krishna here is saying there is much more to God than the dimensions of our world; that this world is a creation of and controlled by God; that while God is all-pervading within our world, God is not of this world, God also exists outside of our world of 3 dimensions of matter, consciousness and mind.

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10

Through the looking glass

This is a response to a comment from GM on the Heaven Is A Place On Earth post. He wrote, first quoting me:

> Vrajabhumi wrote:
>
> > The third misconception is the idea that the material world and spiritual world are in different places. They exist everywhere. The material world is called an illusion because it only exists within the minds of conditioned souls. In the Bhagavatam, Kapila teaches that the source of the material elements is ahankara (false conception of reality). In other words the conditioned soul creates the material world because he doesn’t understand the true nature of reality, he sees it all as mundane. When ahankara is gone, the material world disappears, you realize that you are always with God, everywhere, within you and all around. You realize that this world is actually a magical place, that every atom is controlled, like you’re living in a virtual reality where anything can happen — where instead of a computer created and controlled world, it’s all created and controlled by God, who gives you entrance into a reality where he can show off what he can really do.
>
> Vrajabhumi, your understanding is good. I am surprised how you came to these conclusions by

yourself. Krishna is surely guiding you from within.

Computer generated virtual reality is really the perfect analogy for our reality. In a VR world everything you see looks real (with the best modern tech). An example is the film *Avatar*. In that movie Jake Sully puts on a headset and his consciousness and mind enter into the body of a Pandoran. Then he can live and breath in Pandora's atmosphere. Of course that isn't supposed to be a VR world, but it really is since it's all a computer generated 3-d animation pretending to be real. That movie shows how good modern tech has gotten at making a VR world look real. And what makes it so much more like virtual reality is that the animation was based on the movements of actual actors. They wore special suits so that their movements were able to be caught by a computer program, which was then digitally animated.

Update Nov 12: This is a short video released today showing how Avatar was filmed http://gizmodo.com/5688751/exclusiveavatar-behind-the-scenes-featurette

Our world is also a VR world, simply with a different technology than that created by computers. When you watch a movie or video on your computer, what you are seeing is digital bits and bytes arranged into patterns on a technological platform which translates that digital information into shapes and colors on a screen, which then gives the illusion of reality. If you watch a Beyoncé video it looks like you're actually seeing her sing and dance, but it's really just bits and bytes of data arranged to create the illusion of reality. To experience VR you need special goggles and a headset to speak and hear, and special attachments to your hands and feet so the computer can pick up your movements and translate that to your VR avatar in the 3 dimensional computer generated world. Here is a picture of that gear.

Once inside the VR world you have a body and can interact with the environment, but the environment is all comprised of bits and bytes, and because of that the person in control of the computer can create and control

whatever they desire.

The nature of our world is actually very similar to a VR world, just with a much more sophisticated technology behind it. In a computer VR everything you see is comprised of bits of data translated onto a visual and audio platform. Our world is comprised of quantum bits or particles of matter/energy, which when reduced to the smallest constituents reveals a very strange reality which has confounded physicists.

The smallest quantum particles of matter somehow seem to magically transform from having no mass or weight, into having mass and weight, from which larger particles are constructed, which then all the elements comprising the things of this world are comprised of. The predominant theory is that there is some type of all-pervading field of unknown substance (Higgs field) which somehow causes those massless quantum particles to transform into having mass, i.e. gaining real 3 dimensional substance and weight.

Those tiniest quantum particles are not particles in the sense of tiny pieces of sand, they are actually energy fields, fuzzy things, with the properties of waves of energy, like sound waves, and also the properties of particles at the same time. The reality of matter at the quantum level is extremely unusual and confuses scientists because it seems to be impossible. Very popular theories suggest alternate dimensions to help explain what is being observed at the quantum level, and also the idea of the universe as a virtual reality has been postulated by physicists.

And they are right, our universe is both a virtual reality and supported by unseen alternate dimensions. The unusual properties of matter at the quantum level is due to alternate dimensions involved which cannot be perceived by 3-dimensional machines. Just like thoughts exist in an alternate dimension to matter, they can’t be directly perceived by a machine made of matter because they exist in a different dimension.

Thoughts are not comprised of quantum particles or elements. Yet they exist. Similarly what scientists can see of this world is similar to what you can see of an iceberg on a boat — only the tip of the iceberg is seen because most of the iceberg is underwater. If you look at a person you can’t see the whole person, you only see what is comprised of 3 dimensional matter. What are you missing? The most important part — the mysterious fields of consciousness and

mind which control the body.

Our visible universe is something like that. Quantum particles are part of a universal being existing in many more dimensions than just the 3 of matter, along with consciousness and mind, i.e. the entire universe (seen and unseen) is a superconscious supermind, or conscious supercomputer. But instead of a being like a computer only controlling bits of digital data within itself, the universal supercomputer controls quantum bits of matter/energy within itself, i.e everything in the universe.

A computer is aware of and controls every bit of data on it's drives, it uses that awareness and control to create pixels of color on a screen (3-d screen for virtual reality) which when combined in large enough numbers create what looks like the real world. Super high definition video, especially in 3-d, looks amazingly life like. But it's just manipulated bits of digital data inside of a part of a computer, creating an illusion of reality by a very sophisticated information processing technology.

Similarly, God, a universal supercomputer, has control over all matter from the quantum level, which exists both inside of and as a part of God. Matter behaves so unusually at the quantum level because it's part of an unseen extra-dimensional energy field which is not only conscious and intelligent, but in control of that energy, using part of it's own conscious energy/being to manifest quantum particles into particular sets of information — causing them to form into larger coherent and mathematically precise particles like atoms, and then into molecules, and then into elements, and then into all the things in our universe comprised of elements, e.g. plants, animals, water, air, earth, fire, etc.

How does God do that? How does a computer create an illusion of reality simply using bits of digital information? Because it has full control over those bits of data with sophisticated technology and can shape them to create any type of illusion. God controls our world in a similar way. Essentially we live inside a universal conscious supercomputer which controls matter/energy like a computer controls bits of digital data. We can't see all of that conscious supercomputer because it exists in more dimensions than the 3 we can see with our eyes — just like your computer exists in more dimensions then the video it is creating and showing you, or your consciousness and mind exist in a

different dimension than the body it inhabits and controls.

The ability to relate as closely as possible with the universal supercomputer — or *Isvara* — a Sanskrit word for God, literally meaning *commanding* or *controlling* — is what Bhakti-yoga is supposed to be all about. In a computer generated VR world the users appear as characters or players in digital forms called avatars. *Avatar* is a Sanskrit word which literally means *descent* or *entrance*. It is used to describe God taking on life forms in our world, just as a user descends or enters into bodies in a computer generated virtual reality.

Except in God's case — God is the computer itself and the user, the superuser. Bhakti-yoga is the process for understanding what we are, what God is, and what the purpose of our life is. Not only are we taught that God exists everywhere, and is in total control of and actually comprising everything in the universe, but also God exists as and controls our minds. We are not our minds, we perceive our minds, we use our minds but are different from it — we are consciousness energy, or *atman*:

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.26.28

> yad vidur hy aniruddhākhyaṁ
> hṛṣīkāṇām adhīśvaram
> śāradendīvara-śyāmaṁ
> saṁrādhyaṁ yogibhiḥ śanaiḥ
>
> The mind of the living entity is known by the name of Lord Aniruddha, the supreme ruler of the senses. He possesses a bluish-black form resembling a lotus flower growing in the autumn. He is found slowly by the yogīs.

Aniruddha is another name for God's manifestation or expansion known as Paramatma, the supreme consciousness, the all-pervading mind of God. It's not so much that God only just "appears in the mind," God reveals himself as the mind itself, the controller of the mind.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 1.2.11

> vadanti tat tattva-vidas
> tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam
> brahmeti paramātmeti
> bhagavān iti śabdyate

> Learned transcendentalists who know the Absolute Truth call this nondual substance Brahman, Paramātmā or Bhagavān

Brahman is the impersonal aspect of God; the analogy to a computer would be the hardware. *Paramatma* is the intellect or mind aspect of God; the analogy to a computer would be the software, the information processing system. *Bhagavan* (literally–possessor of fortune) is the personality of God; the analogy to a computer would be the user, the person controlling the computer. Except in God's case the computer itself is the user, the computer itself as a conscious being who is in control of the computer as the superuser.

Regular users are dependent on the computer for information processing and everything else the computer does so they can function in a virtual reality. Similarly we are dependent on God for the information processing in our mind which allows us to function as intelligent people. For example: our ability to process information and understand anything is based on memory. Just like a computer's memory system is what allows a user to play in a virtual reality, our ability to function as intelligent people in our world is due to God providing us with memory.

Without memory we wouldn't understand anything, we would be like new-born infants all of the time. But, we know where we are; what things in our environment are; how to understand language, not only the sounds but also the words and their meanings. In fact our life as intelligent people is totally dependent on a memory system which we have no access to or control over. We simply know what we know and remember what we remember without searching through data stores. Even if we wanted to we wouldn't know where to look, nor would we have the memory of knowing how to look if we could, without the memory of knowing how to look, first being given to us.

Memory simply appears in our minds. Some types of memory are subconscious: how to read and write; coordinated physical movement; understanding language, etc. Other types of memory are conscious: remembering the plot of a book or movie; philosophy; names; etc. In both types of memory we have no control over how those memories appear. They simply appear in our mind allowing us to live as intelligent people. Sometimes we think we control memory, but what do we do to try and remember something — without using physical aids? Where do we look? There is nowhere

to look, memory simply pops into and out of our mind.

Krishna explains in the Bhagavad Gita that he is supplying us with memory. He is in control of our memory system because he functions as our mind, giving us memory as he sees fit. God's own mind is like the software in a computer, it processes stored information and makes it available to the user:

> Bhagavad Gita 15.15
>
> sarvasya caham hrdi sannivisto
> mattah smrtir jnanam apohanam ca
> vedais ca sarvair aham eva vedyo
> vedanta-krd veda-vid eva caham
>
> I am seated in everyone's heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. By all the Vedas I am to be known; indeed I am the compiler of Vedanta, and I am the knower of the Vedas.
>
> 18.61
>
> isvarah sarva-bhutanam
> hrid-dese 'rjuna tishthati
> bhramayan sarva-bhutani
> yantrarudhani mayaya
>
> The supreme controller is at the heart of all beings Arjuna, driving the movements of all living beings, who are mounted on the machine of his universal potency.

Bhakti-yoga teaches how to attain self-realization. Self-realization entails understanding: what we are; how we function; what God is; and what our purpose in life is. That purpose is to fully understand everything, or as much as possible about the nature of our actual situation, and then to enter into a personal physical relationship with an avatar of the controller of the universe. God created male and female forms and appears in both to have relationships with men and women.

But first we need to understand everything to a level where God can enjoy a relationship with a person who can satisfy God on an intellectual level, as close to God's intellectual level as we can get. When we finally attain the highest stage of perfection for us, God gives us new avatars or bodies to use, youthful

and beautiful, which will never age beyond the bloom of teen youth. But prior to that stage we need to understand how our minds work so we can be in constant communication and don't misunderstand the true nature of our self in relation to God. We tend to misidentify our self with our mind, we also tend to misidentify other people with their minds. We need to come to a clear understanding of what is really going on in order for God to enjoy a close relationship with us:

Srimad Bhagavatam 3.28.35-36

> muktasrayam yarhi nirvisayam viraktam
> nirvanam rcchati manah sahasa yatharcih
> atmanam atra puruso 'vyavadhanam ekam
> anviksate pratinivrtta-guna-pravahah
>
> When the mind is thus completely freed from all material contamination and detached from material objectives, it is just like the flame of a lamp. At that time the mind is actually dovetailed with that of the Supreme Lord and is experienced as one with Him because it is freed from the interactive flow of the material qualities.
>
> so 'py etaya caramaya manaso nivrttya
> tasmin mahimny avasitah sukha-duhkha-bahye
> hetutvam apy asati kartari duhkhayor yat
> svatman vidhatta upalabdha-paratma-kasthah
>
> Thus situated in the highest transcendental stage, the mind ceases from all material reaction and becomes situated in its own glory, transcendental to all material conceptions of happiness and distress. At that time the yogi realizes the truth of his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He discovers that pleasure and pain as well as their interactions, which he attributed to his own self, are actually due to the false ego, which is a product of ignorance.

We need to understand that we are not alone in our mind. We are like conjoined twins with God in our mind, except God is the controlling partner. We are one, but not the same. Whatever is going on in our world is not going on haphazardly or chaotically. It's all really a virtual world where the superuser/computer is controlling everyone's minds and everything in nature.

Whatever you experience is what God wants you to experience, nothing is independent. Just like nothing in a virtual digital world happens independent of the computer creating it.

In the 11th Canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam* Krishna says:

> Within this world, whatever is perceived by the mind, speech, eyes or other senses is Me alone and nothing besides Me. All of you please understand this by a straightforward analysis of the facts.
>
> According to My instructions, one should fix the mind on Me alone. If, however, one continues to see many different values and goals in life rather than seeing everything within Me, then although apparently awake, one is actually dreaming due to incomplete knowledge, just as one may dream that one has wakened from a dream.

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11

No one told me about her

This is a reply to a comment from bhavaprema to the Through The Looking Glass post.

You said:

> I’m assuming that you are referring to Paramatma having a physical relationship with one through internal relations, and through relations with others in this life.

No. While most of what you said after that is true, that isn’t what I was referring to in what you quoted from me. You also mentioned an idea of the highest attainment:

> As one may consciously evolve, they eventually become eligible to enter a higher dimension of existence after death, with a higher dimensional body, and directly relate with a direct expansion of Radha Krishna.

As I’ve tried to explain previously (in the post above your comment and other posts like Heaven Is A Place On Earth, and See Me, Feel Me), the substance of this world is either material or spiritual depending on the vision of the seer. There’s no such thing as “higher dimensional bodies.” There is only higher dimensional understanding.

In ISKCON you get the idea that the “spiritual world” (Vaikuntha), or even the “heavenly planets” (Svarga) are non-material in the sense of not comprised of matter. They teach an idea of some type of subtle, invisible to the human eye, extra-dimensional kind of existence. That’s why Prabhupada would say things like the Earth’s moon was a lush heavenly paradise, but we couldn’t see it because our eyes can’t see the subtle heavenly dimension. Prabhupada put forth the idea that matter itself was synonymous with the “material world.” Matter=material; invisible extra-dimensional energy=spiritual. That’s the basic ontology of reality as taught by Prabhupada and believed in by most of his followers.

That isn’t what shastra teaches. Matter is not material, it’s only material if you have material vision. I’ve gone into that in the above links I just gave. The point being, is that the highest attainment for us is our present dimension, only God exists in more subtle dimensions. There are only varieties of existence within this reality for human pastimes with God. God’s human pastimes are performed in human bodies, like our own. They aren’t made of some extra-dimensional substance that is invisible to our eyes, they’re the same as our bodies, and they live in the same world or type of world as we live in.

You then asked:

> Are you saying that the Divine will take a personal direct expansion and relate with one in this life, face to face?

When Arjuna was shown Krishna’s *virat rupa* he saw Krishna inhabiting many forms and aspects of reality that he had been unaware of. The divine vision he gave Arjuna revealed Krishna’s presence in many ways that had not been understood to be Krishna, by Arjuna. Similarly, eventually Krishna will reveal his presence to be much more in your life than you ever realized. Whether that occurs in your present incarnation I can’t say.

At the end you said:

> Vrajabhumi, of course in 11:55 we see Prabhupada's translation and purport talking about devotional service as hard renounced work in giving everything to Krsna (meaning ISKCON). I'm more interested in the Avatar revelation aspect in this regard. Always thankful.

That last sloka is a continuation of the previous few slokas where Krishna says that he can only be understood and seen for what he is by *bhaktya tv ananyaya*, which is an interesting choice of word because ananya means:

> **ananya** mf(%{A})n. no other , not another , not different , identical ; self ; not having a second , unique ; not more than one , sole ; having no other (object) , undistracted ; not attached or devoted to any one else

That part of the verse is usually translated as single minded bhakti, bhakti without any other distractions; or as Prabhupada puts it: "without being mixed with fruitive activities or speculative knowledge." His take on these slokas is all about "devotional service." His interpretation is that Krishna is saying that only by giving up everything and devoting yourself to devotional service can you know Krishna. That is indeed the most basic message or teaching from Prabhupada and ISKCON.

But why is Krishna saying this stuff in this chapter right after showing his vishva-rupa to Arjuna? What these slokas are really about is more literal than the interpretation presented by Prabhupada and ISKCON, and many others. In 11.54 Krishna says he can be seen and known as he is by bhakti that is *ananya*. He means it literally, because of the context of what he just showed to Arjuna. Bhakti means being attached to or devoted to something. *Ananya* means singular, identical, no other, unique, not distracted, etc. Krishna is saying you can see him and know him as he is by being devoted to an undistracted vision of reality where Krishna is seen as everything, where he is seen as identical to everything, where you understand that there is a singular reality in all circumstances.

Prabhupada translated the next verse (or whatever the origin of the translation was) as Krishna saying:

> My dear Arjuna, he who engages in My pure devotional service, free from the contaminations of fruitive activities and mental speculation, he who works for Me, who makes Me the supreme goal of his life, and who is friendly to every living being — he certainly comes to Me.

That's a lot of interpretation rather than a direct translation, and it misses the point of what Krishna has been talking about. He translates *sanga-varjita* as: free from the contaminations of fruitive activities and mental speculation. It literally means: **sanga**—to come together; **varjita**—excluded, abandoned, avoided, deprived of wanting, without, with the exception of.

Krishna is literally saying: my actions perform—*mat-karma-krt*; my primary, ultimate—*mat-parama*; my devotee—*mad bhakta*; coming together, exclude and abandon—*sanga-varjita*.

Sanga-varjita is commonly translated as meaning to renounce worldly attachments. But if we take all of this literally it can be interpreted to have Krishna saying:

Perform my actions, mine ultimately, my devotee; excluding and abandoning the *sanga*, (i.e. the conception of seeing many seemingly different aspects influencing whatever is occurring); free from enmity towards all beings everywhere (nirvaira sarva-bhutesu); gives (sa) advancement (ya) to approach and arrive (eti) at me (mam).

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12

Don't stop till you get enough

It seems that Dear Abhay is at it again, and just like last time it appears that she wrote this for Dandavats.com, but it doesn't show up on their site unless you search for it, or if you have an RSS feed. Just like what happened with her previous article where she wrote about homosexuality, it seems Dandavats.com has a policy for some writers where their posts get published but don't appear on their blog except through the RSS feed or a search for it. The article you link to on the Sampradaya Sun was published on Dandavats.com over two weeks ago, but if you go there you won't see it in the chronological sequence of blog posts on their front or subsequent pages.

Just browsing through her latest opus you can see the likely reason why they refuse to publish her articles—it's quite outside the mainstream of typical ISKCON teachings. Although like I've said before about her posts—they sound suspiciously like Patita Pavana's posts (her husband). Both present an idiosyncratic extrapolated version of Prabhupada's teachings which veer significantly into the speculative fiction genre, while masquerading as scientific or scholarly dissertations, i.e. making bold declarative statements outside of what is usually considered sane, rational, or scientific. Without any attempt at rationalizing her declarations as true, and without offering any attempt at proof either through logic or data of any type (including scripture), she just rambles on as if her truths are self-evident. For example:

> In fact, the desire for sexual enjoyment is the very cause for material embodiment. Therefore it is natural

that when someone wants to be liberated from material existence that they also desire freedom from sexual bondage

While the attraction leading to sexual act pulls together two different genders, the act of sex itself does not have a gender. The experience of sex is beyond gender and for this reason some have mistaken that it can be practiced by individuals belonging to the same gender.

Lord Shiva, also called Shambu in Brahma Samhita, is in charge of the universal genetics.

The attraction to sex is performed by the illusion of gender but the act itself is genderless. This is one of the mysteries of sex.

We have heard deluded statements like, “Living in the present moment is the perfect state of mind.” There are many self-appointed so-called gurus who teach techniques of achieving this unity with time through breathing and relaxation techniques. Nonetheless, catching the present moment has been an elusive goal for the ordinary living entity.

The only proven way for temporarily catching the present moment in the material world has been through one simple technique – sex. This proves that the conditioned living entity is searching after Shri Krishna Who normally reveals His nature in the material world in the form of the irrevocable time factor. Thus, everyone in the conditioned world runs after the unity with time through sex, an experience proven to last only a fraction of a moment. All conditioned living entities who want to enjoy without the consent of Shri Krishna would try to catch the

present moment through sexual experience over and again.

Thus sex drives the material world and supports the three divisions of the time factor. It seems that sexual experience has the potency to expand, divide and compress time…sexual experience is the cause for the fractured experience of past, present and future and the fundament of the material world…

Merging personal individuality with the impersonal brahmajyoti could only be compared to a state of constant sexual experience. The reason is because while merged with the impersonal Brahman the living entity has caught the moment and stays constantly in the sate of sat realization of eternal time. In the state of impersonal sat the living entity has become one with the time factor without realizing that time is a feature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

in the impersonal brahmajyoti the living entity gets hypnotized by the experience of eternal climax. Althoug very pleasurable, this level of realization of the Absolute Truth is not at all advanced. It is difficult to think in this all-consuming state of brahmajyoti.

The moment a living entity who is caught up in the experience of brahmajyoti has a glimpse into his own intelligence, at that very moment he falls down from the sat state back into material existence.

In this world, guilt and blame are the usual feelings associated with sexual experience. The conditioned living entity is after the sexless pleasure rather than the shared experience with a partner who is similarly conditioned. And if some agreements between two

conditioned living entities are achieved in the ways of sexual experience they call that harmony love. Nonetheless, even for those that share some mutual agreement the elusive nature of sexual experience will stay beyond their limited understanding of love.

The feelings of so-called pleasure that stream from the state of sexual experience is coming from His impersonal feature or the impersonal Brahman. Brahmajyoti is the effulgence or the transcendental sex appeal coming from Shri Krishna. Brahmajyoti is the attraction which compels a true devotee to come and offer service to the Supreme Lord Shri Krishna.

Krishna Consciousness is the only real solution for getting rid of sexual bondage and the misconceptions associated with it. Only through Krishna Consciousness we can realize the origin of sexual experience and move beyond it. But as tiny living entities we are stuck in this material existence. The only way out is prayer.

Society undergoes constant changes due to sex desire, the consequences of which are social unrest in the form of gender, rank, class and politics. This is the history of the world. Societies at different times form their own unique cultural values based on their interpretations of emotions associated with sexual experience.

Since the impersonal nature of sex is the perverted reflection of the Absolute reality so-called spiritualist or impersonalists focus with great zeal on the negative emotions associated with sex experience. They surpass in their negation of sexual experience even the moralistic circles of society. The goal of the impersonalists is to achieve eternal sexual experience

by denying its gross material existence. In this way, the mayavadis are great hypocrites. Learning from them will not bring permanent benefit because their main focus is the seizure of sexual enjoyment for eternity.

One who is merged with the impersonal brahmajyoti will not for a long time blame anyone for his failures within material existence. Nonetheless, the guilt associated with impersonalism remains in a seedling form with the living entity even in the brahmajyoti. Until one has a desire to associate with Shri Krshna as an Individual he will suffer the consequences associated with the exploitation of the pleasure potency of the Supreme Lord. The individual who wants eternal pleasure without the Lord must sacrifice his own individuality.

No one can break the surge of sexual climax. The wise know this fact and keep away from the temptations. In the material world the jivas must endeavor for the opportunity to experience sexual pleasure. And in this way the conditioned living entities are actually on a higher platform than the souls trapped in the impersonal brahmajyoti. In the material world the living entities are allowed time for reflection between sexual experiences. In such moments the lucky souls are given the opportunity to meet a genuine spiritual master and understand that Shri Krishna is a person.

On the contrary, life in brahmajyoti is different. The difficulty of breaking off from the existence in the light of Brahman can only be compared to the futility of stopping the climax of sexual experience. Getting out of brahmajyoti is close to impossible. In this way the souls in the material world are luckier because they

> have the opportunity to realize the personal feature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
>
> Those who have the audacity to think that Shrimati Radharani and Shri Krishna engage in sexual experience are still spellbound by the perverted reflection of reality, called impersonalism. It is worth noting that in the relationship between Shri Krishna and His devotees there is only love. That sublime love is beyond the impersonal sexual experience. The concept of love is foreign to the conditioned living entity whose modus operandi is self-satisfaction.

And on and on it goes. You won't read or hear most of that type of dogma from Prabhupada, maybe they're hearing it from some ISKCON guru or sannyasi, or maybe it's their own punditry, either way it seems like it's too outside the mainstream for Dandavats.com to make it easily seen. That last quote where she says Radha and Krishna don't have sexual relationships, but instead the relationships in madhurya bhava or sringara (erotic) rasa are only about "love," while the sexual relationship is relegated to "impersonalism" by her soteriological rationale—seems to be a reversal of logic. Clearly she's not well read on the standard Gaudiya Vaishnava literature written by past acharyas where sringara (erotic) rasa is explored, i.e. the love sports in the bowers of Vraja, for which Bhaktisiddhanta warned his brahmachari and sannyasa followers away from reading due to their ability to arouse sexual desire.

Maybe it's Prabhupada who caused this confusion, sometimes he said there is no sex in the spiritual world, other times he contradicted himself and said there is sex sometimes but they aren't that interested in sex, and other times he said they have the same kind of sexual desires that boys and girls have and therefore have normal sex lives:

There is no sex in Vaikuntha

From http://vanisource.org/wiki/Room_Conversation_about_Marriage_–

_September_24,_1968,_Seattle

> In the spiritual world there is no sex life because there is no birth, there is no death. That is stated in Bhāgavata. Although the women are very, very beautiful, many thousand times more beautiful than here... Their stature of body, their everything, youthfulness, everything. But still they are so much engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, in chanting the glories, that they are not, I mean to say, influenced by the lust. That is stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, in the Vaikuṇṭha. There are women. They also, men and women there is, and they also go by airplane, fly in the sky for trip, and all of them are devotees to Nārāyaṇa, Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa associate. So these things are described. So similarly, amongst the gopīs also. So in the spiritual life there is nothing like this sex pleasure. And the more we forget sex life, that means we are advancing in spiritual life.

There is some sex, but they really aren't into sex in Vaikuntha:

From http://vedabase.net/sb/5/17/12/

> People still have sex life, but there is no pregnancy. In the spiritual world, people are not very attracted to sex life, due to their exalted devotional attitude. Practically speaking, there is no sex life in the spiritual world, but even if sometimes it does occur, there is no pregnancy at all.

There is normal sex life in Vaikuntha:

From http://vanisource.org/wiki/Lecture_on_SB_2.4.3-4_–_Los_Angeles,_June_27,_1972

> So there is, actually. So the higher inquiry should be

that “Then what is the position of this sex life?” The position of this sex life is eternal. The sex life is from Radha and Krsna. Cin-mithuna, cin-mithuna, spiritual. But there the sex life is not like this abominable sex life. There is sex impulse in the original. Otherwise how we have got this sex impulse? In the Vedanta-sutra it is said, janmady asya yatah [SB 1.1.1]. “Supreme Brahman, Absolute Truth, is there, is that from whom everything comes.” So if there is sex life there in the Absolute Truth … There must be sex life. Otherwise where you have got it? Wherefrom we get it? Everything is there, but the difference is that here, everything is contaminated, abominable, and there, everything is without inebrieties; it is happy, healthy, and eternal blissful. That is the difference. The things are there.

Just like Krsna’s mother. Motherly affection of mother Yasoda on Krsna. And Krsna is playing as child, pleasing mother Yasoda. So that thing is also in this material world. Here also, the mother likes to raise his beloved child, the child also plays to give pleasure to the mother. The rasa… Rasa means the humor or mellow. Exchange between the mother and child is there and here also. Similarly friendship, similarly conjugal love. Everything, all the five rasas, mellows, are there. The impersonalists cannot understand. They’re afraid of… As soon as they hear “love,” “Oh, love? Here is love, frustrated. Then it is maya. Then Krsna’s love is also maya.” Therefore they are called Mayavadi. They are carrying this material idea to the spiritual idea. And when they cannot accommodate, they make it zero or impersonal. Sunyavadi. That is their position. They cannot understand that these very things are existing in the spiritual world in a blissful

way. So there is sex, but there is blissful sex. Not that… Here, we want to enjoy sex life, but at the same time want to get out of the result of sex life; therefore we use contraceptive tablets.

Because result of sex life is very, I mean to say, miserable. So we want to avoid the miserable condition of sex life, but there is another life, where there is no miserable condition of sex life. That is spiritual life. But the ordinary poor fund of knowledge, they cannot understand it. They think that “Here, the sex life is miserable, conditional sex life. So if in the spiritual world there is also sex life, then it is also miserable.” So this conception of sex impulse, just like Radha Krsna and gopis’ dealing with Krsna, they think it is maya. Therefore they are called Mayavadis. They have no knowledge. Their brain cannot accommodate this idea that all these activities can be very blissful, supreme. Without any difficulty, without any miserable condition. They cannot understand it. But … Therefore it requires higher intelligence to understand Krsna consciousness. Krsna consciousness is trying to give the people the happiness to which is simply blissful, without any inebrieties.

From the intro to *Kṛṣṇa: The Supreme Personality of Godhead* **by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada**

This Krsna-katha will also be very much appealing to the most materialistic persons because Krsna’s pastimes with the gopis (cowherd girls) are exactly like the loving affairs between young girls and boys within this material world. Actually, the sex feeling found in human society is not unnatural because this same sex feeling is there in the original Personality of Godhead. The pleasure potency is called Srimati Radharani. The

attraction of loving affairs on the basis of sex feeling is the original feature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and we, the conditioned souls, being part and parcel of the Supreme, have such feelings also, but they are experienced within a perverted, minute condition. Therefore, when those who are after sex life in this material world hear about Krsna's pastimes with the gopis, they will relish transcendental pleasure, although it appears to be materialistic.

From Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura's *Sri Surata-kathamrta*

Krishna: O My beloved, although even the greatest miser will sometimes give in charity, you nevertheless refuse to let me drink the nectar of your lips, even though I repeatedly beg for it. Is this not very wonderful?

I am your most earnest student. Please teach me the science of tasting the nectar of your lips. Do not think your instructions will go in vain. On the contrary, they will grow increasingly sweet if you impart them to Me. O my beloved, I consider you my teacher, and I always meditate on you and carry you within my heart. Although you are learned in the science of amorous love, you refuse to teach it to me. Why do You so adamantly refuse?

Radharani: I know how expert you are at weaving a spell to uproot pious girls' chastity. Why are you showing off in this way? By my fate this inimical so-called gopi friend has placed me in your hand. Pleased with your good-fortune, you are now puffed up with pride. This does not at all surprise me. This teasing of pious and chaste young girls is your natural youthful proclivity. You are famous for this.

Krishna: Please do not think I am speaking anything irreligious. I am simply repeating the moral codes of Cupid’s kingdom. These codes are outlined in the scripture recorded by Vatsyayana Muni (author of Kama-sutra). By following them one attains all happiness and auspiciousness.

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13

Reality check, mate

The construction of The Temple of the Vedic Planetarium project (TOVP) in Mayapur, West Bengal, India, is moving at a good pace, and the superstructure (unfinished exterior shell, unfinished concrete walls and floors) is supposed to be completed by this time next year. To see their constant progress in pictures go to http://tovp.org/en/media-gallery.

Meetings going on with various ISKCON leaders for their various concerns just prior to the annual Gaura Purnima festival have just concluded in Mayapur. The festival officially began yesterday with the inauguration ceremony. For those meetings the TOVP team has produced a new video showing an animation of some of the internal finished results of the temple. What I found interesting in the people speaking in the video is the claim of the purpose of the temple, we hear a few times that it's purpose is to challenge the "mechanistic view" of the cosmos.

They, including Alfred Brush Ford aka Ambarish Das, the main financial and moving force behind the project, tell stories on how the project came into existence based on Prabhupada's desire to showcase what he called Vedic cosmology. It can be argued there is no concise "Vedic" cosmology, instead there are different models given from different sources. Prabhupada consistently referred to the Puranic model, as detailed in the Bhagavat Purana and other Puranas, as Vedic cosmology. Prabhupada spoke often of his disdain for modern cosmology, insisting it was all wrong, and that the real structure of the cosmos is revealed in the ancient cosmology of Hindu or Vedic scriptures.

What's interesting is that Prabhupada had a faulty understanding of that Vedic cosmology, leading him to believe that the sun was closer to us than the moon, and that all the stars in the night sky are actually planets, not stars. He taught that the Puranic model of a *Brahmanda* is a literal model of the universe we live in. The descriptions of a Brahmanda are Earth-centric, with the Earth at the center, which the rest of a Brahmanda surrounds. One of the characteristics of a Brahmanda is that it has one star, our sun. Looked at in a simplistic way the Puranic model of a Brahmanda can appear quite unscientific and naive, a quaint mythological construct created by primitive peoples long ago. It appears to promote a flat Earth, among other seemingly primitive ideas.

The truth is that the Puranic model is quite sophisticated, the ancient astronomers and astrologers weren't so naive as a simplistic understanding of their model might appear to those without understanding of their scientific methods. Dr. Richard L. Thompson (Sadaputa Das), a scientist and mathematician, did extensive research on the cosmological models of ancient India. He found that rather than a simplistic view one might have of a mythological Earth-centric flat Earth model of the cosmos being presented in the ancient texts, that instead they present four different models at the same time in the Brahmanda conception—which is spherical, and split in half by the plane of Bhu-mandala which we live on. A Brahmanda or Bhu-mandala can be viewed as:

1. Polar projection map of the Earth
2. Map of the solar system
3. Topographical map of south central Asia
4. Celestial realm of the Devas

Bhu-mandala, as Dr. Thompson shows, can refer to the plane of the ecliptic (plane of Earth's orbit around the sun). The solar system itself is mostly aligned around the Earth's ecliptic, both in the Bhu-mandala model and modern cosmology. The actual sophistication of the ancient Indian models are quite impressive, in no way did they support a flat earth conception—mentioning how if the sun appears in the sky in one part of the world, in the opposite part it's dark. Dr. Thompson goes to great

lengths to show how closely those ancient conceptions relate to modern cosmological views. Dr. Thompson wrote a few books on the topic, you can see this video he made which sums up his fascinating research in the video titled Vedic Cosmology - Mysteries of the Sacred Universe.

As you may have noticed, according to Dr. Thompson's research, in no way does the Brahmanda model refer to our universe. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who was the initiating guru of Dr. Thompson into the Gaudiya Vaishnava bhakti-yoga tradition, held a different view and purpose for his own expositions on "Vedic" cosmology. He always insisted and taught in his lectures, writings, and commentaries to his translations of ancient scripture, that a Brahmanda refers to our universe. He makes it clear that his purpose is not to show the similarities between the ancient view with the modern as Dr. Thompson does, rather his stated purpose is to expose modern cosmology as a complete fraud, and that his interpretation of "Vedic" cosmology is the correct view of our universe. The reason he wanted to build a temple planetarium was to expose the bogus nature of modern cosmology by showcasing the superior "Vedic" cosmology. That was the origin of the current TOVP project being built in Bengal.

In the recent video the TOVP has come out with, instead of Prabhupada's idea of replacing the completely worthless modern cosmology with his version of Puranic cosmology being spoken of as the purpose of the project, instead we're told that it's purpose is to refute the "mechanistic" view of the universe. What does that mean? Mechanistic means a purely mechanical physical process. While that was also without a doubt part of Prabhupada's agenda throughout his teachings, i.e. emphasizing God's presence and control over everything in the universe, his main focus when it came to cosmology was directed at what he saw as a bogus modern view of the structure of the cosmos.

Prabhupada vehemently opposed the Apollo moon landings, claiming they wouldn't be able to succeed because the "demi-gods" on the moon, which he claimed is actually a lush paradise instead of a dust and rock strewn lifeless environment, would prevent the astronauts from landing. He also

claimed that because modern science didn’t understand that the moon was much further away from us than the sun, that they would miscalculate the distance and time needed to reach the moon, and would therefore run out of fuel and starve.

Even using the Puranic model of a Brahmanda and Bhu-mandala which Prabhupada based his views on, Prabhupada was still wrong. He held a very simplistic view of those writings, which as Sadaputa Das (Dr.Thompson) has shown, and really even a cursory reading of the Puranic accounts should reveal—they don’t present the sun as being closer to us than the moon. As I’ve pointed out earlier, and you can see in the video above by Dr. Thompson, the Puranic account has Bhu-mandala as a vast ecliptic plane, with the sun slightly lower above the ecliptic than the moon, but the distance of the Earth (Bharata-varsha) from the sun is still much further than from the moon. Imagine a plate with two balls on strings above it, one ball revolves around the center in a large orbit a long distance from the center, and the other ball revolves in a closer orbit to the center. If the ball in the closer orbit is a bit higher above the plate than the ball in the large orbit, that doesn’t make it further away from the center of the plate beneath them, it’s still closer. Prabhupada didn’t understand that, he insisted that the moon was further from us than the sun because it is said to be higher above the Bhu-mandala plane than the sun—and therefore the moon landings would fail because of that miscalculation, besides not being allowed by demi-gods.

After the moon landings occurred, Prabhupada heard from some disciples about a guy who was selling a book promoting a moon landing hoax theory, claiming the moon landings had been faked. Prabhupada latched onto that idea and promoted it whenever the topic came up. You can see some of his talks on the moon landing hoax and the moon in general at Can You Answer? Many of Prabhupada’s leading disciples during his time with them didn’t understand Puranic cosmology either. In this next conversation you can hear them try to figure how it is that you can travel east or west from the same place and end up in the same destination if the Earth isn’t a sphere, i.e. if you leave from Los Angeles, traveling east or west you can get to India—how is that possible if what Prabhupada

taught was correct?

From Bhu-mandala Diagram Discussion July 2, 1977 Vrindavan, India

> **Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami**: Look at the earth. Now, this is a real question that we still have to answer. They picture the earth round, and we say, no. Bhū-maṇḍala is like a lotus, like this, and the earth is only one part of one island in Bhū-maṇḍala, and it's not, you know, it's not round(?). It doesn't look like that. And all the pictures they take of the earth when they go up in their satellites show round. And we're going to tell them that it's not. This is a very tricky question. In other words, if this is the picture of the world, like this, and we say that... If we take an airplane from here, from Los Angeles. Now, supposing we go to India, which is here. So there's two ways to go. One way, you can go like this, and the other way, you can go like that. But if the earth is not a round globe, then how is it sometimes people go from Los Angeles via Hawaii to Japan and then India? So we can't figure this out. We have experience, those of us who have flown, that actually the plane went from Los Angeles to Hawaii to Tokyo to Hong Kong and then to India. So it doesn't work out in our maps so far, right? We can't figure it out. This thing has to be very complete in its answers. Otherwise everyone will laugh at us. We can't leave any loopholes.

It appears the TOVP project may not be sticking with Prabhupada's original purpose and ideas about "Vedic" cosmology defeating bogus modern cosmology. In the new video, they're talking about showing the faults of a mechanistic view of the cosmos as their purpose, and some time back I read that Sadaputa Das (Dr. Thompson) was consulted as a designer for the project's cosmological presentations. In a lecture a few days ago by ISKCON GBC member Badrinarayana Das in Mayapur, he related a story

about Prabhupada outsmarting some “foolish karmi.” I know, how surprising! (inside joke about B. Das and his incessant Prabhupada myth making stories) He tells about a time in 1970 when Prabhupada gave an interview to an infamous radio host in Los Angeles:

> I have one particular incident that comes to my mind. (If anyone has a cell phone you can shut it off. Bad news will still be there later on. Don’t worry.) It was the late spring or early summer of 1970 and I was trying to become a bhakta in our Los Angles temple and Prabhupada was invited to speak on a radio show. Anyone who lived in California at that time will know the man’s name was Joe Pyne. So it was the Joe Pyne Show and he was infamous for being sarcastic and just really going after his guest. That was the rasa; he would try to slap around his guest – like a boxing match. So the devotees were thinking Prabhupada shouldn’t go. Why should he subject himself to this? But Prabhupada calculated we will just say Krishna, Krishna, and we will count how many times we say Krishna and the people out there in Southern California will at least hear Krishna. So Prabhupada went. And sure enough, the man was true to color.
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> The first thing he said was, “Your coming here to America and you are coming from India, what can you possibly teach us. We already have religious institutions. We have our understanding of God and you are coming from a place where the death rate is so high. What can you teach us?” Prabhupada said, “Death rate is the same everywhere – one hundred percent.” [Laughter] So the man was a little taken by that. There was a little pause then he came back and he said, “According to your cosmology you say the world is flat.” Now they are actually talking, it is a long story but the plane of the solar system, all the planets,

> – that is relatively flat. That is what the Vedas are talking about. But this man misunderstood. He thought it meant the planet earth. So he said, “You say the world is flat.” Prabhupada replied, “Everywhere I walk it is.”

You can see that he’s been influenced by Sadaputa to give a correct understanding of Bhu-mandala as the plane of the ecliptic, he also makes it seem that the radio host was at fault for thinking Prabhupada taught the Earth is flat. In fact you can see in the previous quote above, that ISKCON’s leading disciples even 7 years later in 1977, couldn’t understand that the Earth is a sphere because of Prabhupada’s cosmological teachings.

Ambarish Das (Alfred Ford, heir to Ford motors) famously left ISKCON when he first heard Prabhupada’s take on Puranic cosmology and that Prabhupada disputed the moon landings (maybe also the 5th canto of the Bhagavatam’s descriptions of hellish punishments). Now we see that he’s the driving force behind bringing Prabhupada’s vision of Vedic cosmology to the world’s attention with the fantastic temple he’s helping to build. It’s obviously going to create a lot of publicity when completed. It’s going to be interesting to see how closely they stick to Prabhupada’s original purpose and vision, or if it will be completely based on Sadaputa’s and similar research? Will they squander the good publicity generated in the amazing architecture and beautiful temple by focusing on what Prabhupada actually taught and thereby making them a laughingstock?

I guess we’ll have to wait and see, but one problem I see that is going to be hard to get around even if they stick to what Sadaputa Das taught—Prabhupada is undoubtedly going to be glorified and become a central part of the completed project—I assume. The problem is what Prabhupada taught about Vedic cosmology, and his complete disdain for modern cosmology. Will they go with that view of attacking the basic structure of the solar system and cosmos? Or will they be content with presenting the similarities with modern cosmology as Sadaputa attempted? Either way, when people search online for what Prabhupada

actually taught, they may be in for a surprise.

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All along the watchtower

The current lead article on ISKCON's two main websites Dandavats.Com and ISKCON News are about some new positions being filled on some sort of newfangled bureaucratic setup called the "GBC Strategic Development Plan" (website still to come). Trying to figure out their purpose through all the boilerplate language used in the article by ISKCON public spokesman Aniruddha Das, may be difficult, e.g.

> Tamohara is enthusiastic to take up his new service. "Taking the instructions of Srila Prabhupada, the GBC body has developed exciting and far-reaching strategic plans and enacted a number of significant resolutions," he said. "The aim of these efforts is to spread Krishna consciousness and to support and care for the devotees.

This types of bureaucratic planning and arrangement in ISKCON may sound familiar to you. A few years back ISKCON leadership was promoting something called the Spiritual Strategic Planning Team, going so far as to ask the worldwide community for input. The somewhat wide ranging purpose of that group was to come up with "synergistic solutions" for increasing the health and growth of ISKCON and it's members. They held a bunch of meetings that were dutifully reported on in the ISKCON media outlets, but I don't know if anything significant has ever come out of it.

This new GBC strategic planning team seems to have the same agenda, so I don't know if this is the same bureaucracy with some new faces and a

new name, or if it’s something separate. For all we know it’s just an excuse to give money to favored friends by creating pseudo jobs for them; or maybe it’s a way of centralizing the power dynamic over the temples and local GBC; or maybe it’s actually a sincere attempt to make ISKCON work better and more efficiently.

Whatever it’s true purpose is, nothing is going to help ISKCON when the proverbial poop hits the fan. Because when it does, they’re all going to be stained by it. And by then it will be too late for “synergistic strategic” bureaucratic wrangling to expand ISKCON’S fortunes. Okay, maybe in India it won’t be so bad because they lack to a degree the politically correct media, business, and government combine that so predominates elsewhere.

In my previous post I wrote:

> On many fronts ISKCON is trying to present a less controversial or crazy version of “The Hare Krishna’s” than what many devotees would like. Many Prabhupada fanatics would like to present Prabhupada’s “controversial” statements on a regular basis as if they are God’s words from on high; as if to reject them is done at your own foolish peril; and as if they were spoken by Prabhupada/God specifically to change the world into accepting their perfect vision.
>
> They often will go on and on presenting Prabhupada’s ignorant ramblings as the “message of Krishna,” as if to accept anything else is a sign of a lack of faith in Krishna—and in Prabhupada as a perfect God inspired super-being. For many it’s a test of devotion and loyalty to Krishna. They’ll judge your level of loyalty and devotion based on whether or not you’ll blindly support and promote anything Prabhupada ever said. In ISKCON and the wider community, that type of attitude permeates the culture, peer-pressuring people

> into group-think, i.e. the sublimation of a person's sense of right and wrong in favor of socialization.
>
> How long will the leaders of ISKCON tolerate that type of insane demagoguery? How many of them can see a big potential problem with public relations and their preaching efforts, but are too afraid to speak out? How many will sacrifice public perception for ISKCON acceptance as a cent percent loyal "Prabhupada man?" How many will be content with being seen as laughingstocks by the wider society?

It would be more accurate to have added *contemptible* to that last sentence. Because that's in ISKCON's future if they don't figure out a way to fix the problem before it's too late.

While Radhanath Swami is busy being lauded around the world by major corporations, major universities and famous professors, as well as government leaders (as are some other ISKCON leaders, mostly in India) as some type of Hindu New Age celebrity saint, his brothers and sisters in arms are busy as bees trying to promote Prabhupada and all his repellent (in the eyes of Radhanatha's new audience) ideas as sacrosanct truth that must be enforced over ISKCON (and even the entire world) on ISKCON's official websites. Look at this piece of fatuous sexism, or this homophobic weirdness.

What will happen to Radhanath Swami's reputation when those people who are asking him to speak at the British parliament, or at the biggest banking corporation in the world, or at Princeton, or promote him on big time websites like the Huffington Post—when they find out Prabhupada supports and believes in so many things which are anathema to them? What will happen when they find out Radhanath Swami is dedicated to promoting the teachings of a man who said Hitler wasn't so bad; who made explicit antisemitic statements; who made vicious racist statements, including teaching his followers that black people should be enslaved?

What will happen when they find out Radhanath swami is presenting the teachings of his guru, not his own; that he's dedicated to being a full-time supporter and worshiper of a man he promotes as being a spiritually perfected God-like world savior; that he claims to be a sold out menial servant to the wisdom, vision and organization of the world savior of this modern age—who was actually a hardcore racist; a virulent homophobe; a hardcore sexist and misogynist; and who promoted a large panoply of extremely ridiculous pseudo-scientific beliefs—with the caveat that any differing opinion was imbecilic?

It's only a matter of time until the truth will be exposed about who and what Radhanath Swami, ISKCON, and it's leaders and followers are promoting. Does ISKCON have some sort of contingency plan for when the poop hits the fan? Maybe some magical poop stain remover? Unlikely. Their attitude seems to either be that of burying their heads in the sand and hope it won't be a problem down the road, or simply not caring because they believe it when Prabhupada taught them that it's good for the "uncivilized, ignorant, low class" people of the world (practically everyone but his followers) to learn "the truth." You know, obvious truths like: "the earth is stationary while the sun revolves around it; the moon while being twice as far from us as the sun, is actually twice as big as the sun." Or, "if girls don't get married by puberty and stay away from schooling, than their father is a failure." Or, "black skinned people are naturally sinful and low class, because they were sinful in their past life they've been born in ugly black skinned bodies as punishment from God." You know, stuff everyone should believe for their own good.

I think some of them are rightly worried. I've seen Hridayananda Swami and Devamrita Swami both try to bring this unpleasant truth up, but they do so very tentatively due to the Prabhupada-worship culture of ISKCON and the wider community. The fanatics and guru haters are always looking for someone to pounce on to chew up and spit out, all of course in "service to and defense of Prabhupada's movement."

Do the fanatics care about the possible future scenarios when Prabhupada's "controversial" statements and teachings become widely

known and reported in the world's various media? Some clearly don't, even though they're in a position to lose so much. Look at the troubles ISKCON is going through right now in Russia—they might be evicted from the Moscow Temple by the government, and they're also being prosecuted in the east over Prabhupada's Gita—which the prosecution is trying to get banned as some type of socially harmful literature. Most people believe the Orthodox Church is behind the harassment, as they have been in the past. What would happen if the Russian media and Orthodox Church all of a sudden started publishing all of Prabhupada's controversial statements? Right now the intelligentsia in Russia is sympathetic to ISKCON, seeing them as New Agey victims of old-school religious bigotry. What will their attitude be when they find out who and what ISKCON is really promoting?

Look at Sivarama Swami as another example. He's a popular guru and leader with a lot of accomplishments in Europe, especially in Hungary. He's even given respect by leading members of the wider society, and the Jewish community. I think it was the daughter of the Hungarian president who was an ISKCON supporter? Yet he doesn't seem to see the danger of his attitude towards Prabhupada, i.e. how that can ruin all the good will he has generated in Europe.

He insists that he doesn't care for any opinion other than Prabhupada's, and that if anyone has a problem with Prabhupada's outlook, then they're not welcome in ISKCON. He even held a symposium on this very topic a few years back with several ISKCON gurus. You can hear the symposium on the links at this webpage for this book. He talks so passionately in aggression against anyone who would disagree with Prabhupada on anything, making it clear he considers ISKCON not as a society for *Krishna consciousness*, with Krishna and his teachings as the center; rather he passionately promotes ISKCON as a society for *Prabhupada consciousness*, with Prabhupada and his teachings as the center.

The GBC actually kowtowed to pressure from Prabhupada fanatics and made it official ISKCON law that the role of the guru in ISKCON is not to connect the disciple to God, as is the traditional role of a guru—the law now in ISKCON is that the role of the guru is to connect the disciple to

Prabhupada. Officially making a break with the Gaudiya Sampradaya by that decree. They have officially put the worship of a human as the central purpose of their sampradaya.

How’s the truth of Prabhupada going to affect ISKCON’s gurus and guru wannabes, when what Prabhupada actually taught is brought to the attention of society at large? What if some disgruntled ex-member sends this article to the Russian media, or the Hungarian Media, or the Indian media, or the British media? It’s only a matter of time before the truth comes out to the public.

It’s an inexorable fact of modern life that when someone becomes famous to some degree, that various media outlets look for dirt on them to sell their TV shows, magazines, books, newspapers, or websites. Radhanath Swami has just about reached that level; ISKCON Bhaktivedanta Manor has in England; possibly others in Europe (Poland, Russia) or in America (Utah). But in India it’s another story. India is where ISKCON is very famous, all over, and for a variety of reasons. I know there are a lot of anti-religious types in India, especially in the more communist areas like Bengal, who would probably love to see ISKCON’s reputation ruined in the press.

How long till that happens on the instigation of a disgruntled ex-believer? Is there a plan on how to deal with the bad press? This wouldn’t be like the bad press from the child abuse scandal, which was blamed on bad management, and was something people can accept as something that wasn’t inherently part of ISKCON. But how do you shift the blame from Prabhupada when he’s promoted as the second coming of Christ, as the center of everything from which all of ISKCON revolves around, dancing and chanting in his glorification?

At the present moment this is something ISKCON leadership tries to sweep under the rug. Some of them are deluded fanatics who want to glorify Prabhupada’s mad ideas as the height of sophistication. Otherwise how can Dandavats.com publish overtly crass sexist and extremely harsh homophobic articles? Jesus Frankenchrist, they even fearlessly publish articles supporting Prabhupada’s looney pseudo-science

theories—including the ones about the moon being further from the sun, and the supercilious support of the moon landing hoax. What's next? Supporting child brides? Slavery for black people? Dictatorship as the preferred form of Government? Or are those topics somehow not as suitable a topic as crass sexism and misogyny, virulent homophobia, and completely crazy science? Do they think that the people who see nothing wrong with the crap they already publish, will suddenly be offended by the crap they haven't? Are there any actual sane adults left in ISKCON?

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The love guru

This is a reply to a comment from gm to the Last Train to Clarksville post

gm wrote:

> I like that Radhanath Swami mentions Gandhi and is appreciative of him. Most Iskcon devotees are critical of him….

I did a quick search to see what he said about Gandhi, I couldn't find anything except a few mentions: one of which makes Gandhi look like he was emotionally abusive to his wife; another one where he used Gandhi as an example of having faith—that someone you have never personally experienced you have faith actually existed, so everyone has faith in something (pointless example of faith BTW); and another one where he used Gandhi as part of an example of surrender being something positive for you (using Gandhi in the analogy made no sense to me).

Granted this was only a 5 minute search, is there some other mention of Gandhi by Radhanath Swami which has you appreciative of him? From what I have seen he uses Gandhi as a theatrical prop in his stories. To me Radhanath is a con artist because he is doing the old bait and switch, it reminds me of ISKCON common money collecting or book distribution tactics of deceptive marketing, e.g. telling the people the donations are for humanitarian causes, or the books are about yoga and health. Radhanath Swami presents himself to the public preaching an unusual mix of feel good spiritual sophistry, thereby creating a deceptive understanding of

what Radhanath Swami is actually representing (Prabhupada's teachings). Once you go deeper into what he is really all about (besides self-promotion) you will find ISKCON, but that may be after you have parted with a lot of money.

What he is doing is kind of like how the public is conned into giving money or buying books from ISKCON "sankirtan devotees" with the belief they are doing it for something other than ISKCON. That kind of deceptive marketing is understandable due to ISKCON's poor public perception outside of India and Indian communities, but that doesn't make it the superior marketing strategy if what they will find at the end of the rainbow is the demand for everyone to "surrender" to Prabhupada—the result for most people will be the feeling of being deceived. This strategy Radhanath employs is not sustainable over the long run, it's only a matter of time before his reputation of being a dodgy fanatic Hare Krishna will precede him, and by than he will have burned many bridges.

I wanted to clarify what I meant by this statement from my previous comment:

> Radhanath Swami presents himself to the public preaching an unusual mix of feel good spiritual sophistry, thereby creating a deceptive understanding of what Radhanath Swami is actually representing (Prabhupada's teachings).

Whenever I have seen Radhanath Swami on TV or speaking to the public, he gives a canned reply to what inspired him to Indian religion:

1) He says that when he was a teenager in the '60s he saw so much contradiction between religious teachings and the reality of what the people who were followers of those religions actually represented in the world, i.e. supposedly moral teachings in religious teachings with so much immoral actions by the followers in the name of God. He says he saw that contradiction and therefore sought out the teachings from the East because of his disenchantment with western religious inspired morality. He

mentions civil rights, the women's movement, "the social upheavals of the '60s" etc.

This is an attempt to denigrate other religions as failures, or at the least as promoting immoral (by modern liberal standards) teachings in the name of God and absolute morality. I call this new age sophistry because the attempt is to deceive his audience with the idea that he is promoting some new age liberal spirituality—when in reality he is promoting Prabhupada and his teachings, which are more oppressive than anything taught by mainstream western religions, .e.g Prabhupada promotes sexism, misogyny, racism, fascism, etc. But his audience doesn't know that, and Radhanath knows they don't. So he uses that ignorance to promote himself and his teachings as some new age yoga thing (the reference to the counterculture and the '60s which he always mentions) which is opposed to the hypocrisy of western religions.

2) He always says he's teaching bhakti-yoga; he defines that as selfless love and service to others, and to God. He says that what is missing in religion and human society is selfless service, love, and devotion. Selfless service, love, and devotion to what? To each other, to humanity at large, and to God. This is what he presents as his message of a bhakti-yoga guru.

The reality is that he is promoting karma-yoga, not bhakti-yoga. Bhakti-yoga is not about selfless service, love, and devotion to your loved ones, friends, society, and also to God. It's about self-realization, it's about learning the truth of ourselves, our reality, and God's relationship with both, and attaining and entering into the highest possible level of human consciousness. Also, he doesn't practice what he preaches. In ISKCON, the teaching is all about selflessly serving the gurus and ISKCON. The gurus are taught as the recipients of your bhakti, and of course selfless service—without which you cannot please or know God. All they are expected to do is speak now and then and bask in and enjoy your worship.

What's so ironic about his definition of Bhakti-yoga is that he was a leader of a murderous totalitarian cult (the Kirtanananda cult), and later became a leader of another totalitarian cult which promotes the opposite of what

he promotes. He promotes service to loved ones and society at large—ISKCON members often denigrate social service, and love and devotion to family and friends—teaching that it's a waste of time and energy to do anything but service to Prabhupada (and by extension ISKCON gurus). In fact they promote either subtly or grossly the breaking apart of any relationship that hinders your 100% devotion and surrender to ISKCON. ISKCON promotes all the things Radhanath Swami is supposedly against. But he is only against those things when speaking to an ignorant audience—when he speaks to ISKCON audiences he preaches the same things as the rest do, e.g. the only important thing is service to a guru, specifically Prabhupada, and more specifically to one of his guru representatives in ISKCON.

Where is the love guru when he is teaching in ISKCON?

I just wanted to add one more thing that cracked me up with the myth making of Radhanath as some kind of heroic yogi, I saw it on one of his many websites (they are trying to bury all the murder conspiracy stuff on search engines by creating countless websites)

> Due to a small mistake of the immigration officials at Kabul, Richard (now Radhanath Swami) was now stranded alone at night. A friendly Dutch lady took Richard to her home and fed him dinner and provided a room. Soon however, she presented her body to Richard to fulfill her lusty desires. Richard's mind reeled as he struggled to come out of her grips. Her six foot bodyguard threatened to kill Richard if he didn't submit to her desires. With all his might, Richard heaved the woman off and escaped, the body guard closely chasing to kill Richard.

This is used as an example of the dangers of lust. Really? A yogi might be threatened with death by a lusty rich woman if he doesn't give into her mad lust? Here we have the typical ISKCON use of women as hyper dangerous femme fatales to the absurd degree, to such a degree that you

can be killed if you aren’t “pure” in your negation of sex.

We are seriously asked to believe that happened to Radhanath Swami—he may be many things—but an irresistible sexual object is not something I think any woman has ever seen him as. It’s typical ISKCON myth making designed for a gullible Indian audience who are used to tall tales of yogis encountering bizarre or miraculous things in their life—somehow the guru always triumphs by dint of their superior Godlike level of consciousness and or mystic potency. The message is that the guru is some special person you should worship so that you become special as well.

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16

Running away

In a recent comment from Seeker's he links to a few posts on ISKCON guru Trivikrama Swami's blog, quotes from them, and comments. He points out the bizarre status accorded to Prabhupada in those links, and in the ISKCON community in general. One thing Seeker wrote was this:

> Fact is stranger than fiction – any amount of sarcasm to point out flaws in the concept of guru as understood by ISKCON is overcome effortlessly by the comments of ISKCON gurus. Nothing is more hilarious than reality, it seems. Their articles make me wonder what kind of inner world that these gurus must be dwelling in – for example, in this link, an innocent devotee asks what should he do if he hears Srila Prabhupada's statements being commented as wrong and the guru replies that he should protest and should even be willing to give up his life – scary.

When I was in ISKCON 30-35 years ago, when it came to how Prabhupada was represented, it was quite different than it is now. You wouldn't hear people speak about Prabhupada having a special position above everyone else. Of course he was spoken of as being special and above all of us, but the attitude was that because we were all so new to bhakti-yoga that of course someone like Prabhupada was special and above us (what to speak of non-devotees). His specialness was taught as being a relative specialness, and, that all of us could attain his level of being eternally liberated, 100% self-realized, and in a direct one on one relationship with

Krishna. Of course, Prabhupada *was* promoted in awe and reverence, but not because he was being taught as some special type of being, as a one of a kind person in all of history—it was because of his books, and how ISKCON began, along with it's rapid growth, that Prabhupada was held in special awe and veneration. That ISKCON origin story was presented as a miraculous event, as if it was a superhuman feat. But, it was presented as Prabhupada's empowerment by Krishna due to Prabhupada's devotion to strictly obeying his guru's "orders."

Prabhupada was used as an example of what we could achieve if we also strictly followed our guru's orders. Prabhupada wasn't taught as being above any and all faults; you weren't assailed as a blasphemous demon if you disagreed with anything Prabhupada taught. It was the general mood that it didn't matter if Prabhupada made mistakes in things he said, he didn't have to be seen as above making mistakes. It was drilled into our heads that the sole qualification of the spiritual master was in not changing the teachings. If the guru made some mistakes about any variety of other things, that wasn't seen as diminishing him, and it wasn't forbidden to disagree with those things. The importance of the parampara was stressed, the strict adherence to "not speculating" was stressed. The all-importance of handing down the unchanged teachings as the qualification for being a guru was taught as what differentiated ISKCON from all the "bogey yogis" who presented themselves with possessing mystic powers as their qualification to be gurus. It was stressed that Prabhupada wanted all of us to be gurus just like him.

And that was why ISKCON transformed so seamlessly and completely into the zonal acharya era after Prabhupada left. Of course many didn't like it, but that had to do with their belief that those gurus weren't yet advanced enough to be treated as if they had attained the highest level of God consciousness, as was the presumption about Prabhupada's position. It wasn't the idea of the new gurus being treated like Prabhupada that was a problem that was spoken about (at first). The idea or paradigm of their being treated as if they were intimately relating with God, and that they should be surrendered to wholeheartedly as highly qualified empowered leaders, wasn't the problem. The idea wasn't the problem, it was the guys

filling that paradigm that many had a problem with.

The ritvik ideology grew out of a lack of faith in those gurus. Not long after the zonal acharya era began in 1977-78, a few prominent members (Pradyumna dasa, Jadurani dasi, Kailasa candra dasa, and Yasodanandana dasa) began to criticize the new system, they wrote and gave out tracts in defiance of the new ISKCON. But, their criticism was limited to the qualifications of the new gurus, not the paradigm. They were expelled from ISKCON for their activity, but they affected many members, being as they were respected members of the community. As the years went by, the eccentric, cruel, or criminal behavior of some of the gurus became more and more apparent. In the early 1980s Yasodanandana created the ritvik ideology. Within a few years many people had bought into it, with different groups having different interpretations.

The ritviks appealed to the ISKCON community outside of ISKCON properties with endless written and verbal attacks on ISKCON gurus. It seems they felt the best way to affect change to the ritvik cause was to attack the credibility of the ISKCON acharyas. This had a profound effect on the gurus and would lead us to where we are today in ISKCON.

One guru, Kirtanananda Swami Bhaktipada, was sent to prison as part of a murder conspiracy against a ritvik devotee named Sulochana. Sulochana das was upset with his wife refusing to leave Kirtanananda’s ashram community in West Virginia to live with him. He was a mentally unsound person who couldn’t accept that his wife left him because of her dislike for him and the lifestyle he planned for them (living in a van or motorhome while traveling around selling stuff). Sulochana had bought wholeheartedly into the concept Prabhupada had taught on how a wife was supposed behave—she’s supposed to be a completely submissive slave-like worshipful disciple of her husband/guru. Sulochana’s wife refused to behave like that, and left him (she described him as a lazy, unwilling to support her and the kids, delusional, and constantly stoned). He blamed Kirtanananda for allowing her to stay in his country ashram community. He was incensed that Kirtanananda Swami didn’t agree with him, with Prabhupada, about the role of the wife. He expected and demanded his

wife be sent to him. Thinking there was nothing wrong with himself, thinking he was someone whom his wife should worship, he couldn't believe she would voluntarily leave him. He believed it was a conspiracy by Kirtanananda, who "poisoned" her mind against Sulochana so she would join the money making apparatus of Kirtanananda Swami.

Sulochana became obsessed with revenge, with writing a long diatribe on ritvikism, and generally speaking in a threatening manner about Kirtanananda. This would have serious repercussions for him, Kirtanananda, ISKCON, and the ritvik movement. Fearing a crazed Sulochana harming Kirtanananda (who had been attacked and almost died shortly before, by a mentally disturbed ISKCON member) and possibly fearing the dissemination of information revealing Kirtanananda's homosexual and pedophile proclivity, a murder conspiracy was hatched by Kirtanananda and or his closest cohorts. Sulochana was shot and killed while sitting in a parked vehicle he was living out of, right near the ISKCON temple in Los Angeles, 1986.

It wasn't long until newspapers and television shows around the world blared the story of the sordid murders orchestrated by leading members of the Hare Krishnas. This history is well known to most Hare Krishnas, if you need more info there is plenty on the Internet to read.

The ISKCON gurus were undoubtedly worried about the Sulochana affair. The ritviks propagandized heavily that Sulochana was killed because of his exposing the bogus guru ideology of the ISKCON gurus. The gurus probably saw it a bit differently, more likely they were afraid of people like Sulochana causing them physical harm, more so than any philosophical exposé. Because Prabhupada had casually advocated extreme violence or killing people for blasphemy as not only God sanctioned, but at times imperative; and because ISKCON membership had never lacked in the violent member department due to its then easy to join open-door policy on full-time membership—it's than easy to understand the gurus being worried about the combustible combination of the ritvik claim of their punishable great offense for taking the role of guru, along with the number of potentially violent mentally unsound people in and around ISKCON.

It was then, after years of criticism for daring to act as gurus, or for not allowing any more gurus, that ISKCON guru policy began to change. They thought that if they could share their position with others then the criticism would damper. It did appease many, and many more gurus were added over the years, with a policy that allows anyone to become a guru if they pass strict qualifications. But the ritviks were not satisfied, as well as many others. The ritvik ideology was attractive to so many because it does away with the ISKCON gurus altogether. There were many disgruntled members and ex-members who blamed various gurus for all the problems in ISKCON, and many had personal troubled acrimonious dealings with the gurus over the years. Wouldn't it be better for everyone if those problems and potential problems went away for good? And wasn't Prabhupada special? Isn't the proof of his specialness in the low caliber of the ISKCON gurus when compared to him? That was the genesis of how ISKCON and the wider community came to promote Prabhupada in the future as like a God among mere mortals.

As the ritvik groups began to gain more and more of a following, and because the Internet made it easy for them to try to convince everyone that ISKCON gurus were not only insincere egotistic usurpers; fools; redundant; thieves and fraudsters—but were also murderers in a poisoning conspiracy which killed Prabhupada—it became seen as prudent for ISKCON gurus to get out of the line of their fire. The guru policy shift hadn't stopped the ritviks, and in many ways hardened them. A new guru theology began to emerge, which would radically change ISKCON in hopes of appeasing the ritvik movement, which was starting to gain more steam.

Laws were passed, speeches were written, the mood in ISKCON was changed. Prabhupada was no longer just another member of the parampara; his level of God consciousness was no longer just like our own potential; no longer were the gurus after Prabhupada ever to be seen as on the same level as Prabhupada, in fact they were no longer gurus in the traditional sense according to ISKCON law. The official ISKCON guru theology was changed to reflect the fear of ISKCON leaders and gurus of being constantly criticized on the Internet, and threats of bodily harm. They hoped that by putting Prabhupada on an unreachable special God-

like level, and then actually make it written into law that the only role of the guru in ISKCON is to “connect the disciple to Prabhupada,” rather than to God, as is the traditional role of a guru—that all their unrelenting critics would finally relent. After all the new role of the guru in ISKCON is officially that of a ritvik priest in all but name. And after all, they’ve adopted a vision of Prabhupada as a demigod, full of mystical powers and possibilites of an infinite variety, a spiritual superhuman superman, a once in a planet’s history savior; like Krishna he has descended from heaven to save humanity, and whose every whimsical idea is perfect eternal law in ISKCON (officially). To disagree with Prabhupada, or present any idea of any other guru, or to compare anyone else to Prabhupada—can get you banned and demonized as a heretic blasphemer.

Till now, the plan hasn’t really worked. The ritviks and guru haters are more rabid than ever before. Once they realized the power of the Internet, the criticism went into overdrive. Every little guru is constantly examined and judged, and of course found wanting to say the least. The hatred for them is evident on a myriad of websites, blaming them for every sin under the sun, but especially for being rogue agents in their takeover as the worshipful gods of ISKCON from Prabhupada—thereby being “offenders” to Krishna, and even worse—to Prabhupada. Anyone who looks at the Sampradaya Sun website, or the Prabhupadanuga websites and others, besides the Prabhupada worship, can see their passionate denunciations of ISKCON leaders daily, as if there is an unlimited supply of Prabhupada related offenses to complain about. Really there’s just a handful, repeated in different ways ad nauseam. At the other end of the spectrum are the ISKCON and pro-ISKCON websites, which also display an unending supply of bizarre over-the-top Prabhupada worship, having him essentially supplant Krishna as the point and purpose of Gaudiya Vaishnavism for that community.

To all of them Prabhupada was Jesus, Moses, Mohammed, Allah, Krishna, and Jehovah combined. He’s worshiped as the almighty perfect source of anything and everything worthy of mentioning about anything. If it ain’t Prabhupada—it’s somehow or the other pure unadultered crap—unless it’s from an acharya previous to Prabhupada. But they’re of course mostly

relegated to obsolete redundancy.

This is the current ideology of not only the Prabhupada devotee ISKCON hater community, but also of ISKCON and it’s devoted community:

> Srila Prabhupada, the most wondrous benediction moon, gave us everything—and all we will need, forever. Who do we think we are thinking that we can understand the previous acharyas anyways? As our guru and savior, we are meant for nothing but devoted servile loyalty to Prabhupada. Any other instruction from any other guru or person is a betrayal. After all, without Prabhupada we wouldn’t be saved, we would all have gone to hell. Prabhupada changed our destiny. We don’t even need scriptures, simply by worshiping Prabhupada; meditating on Prabhupada’s pastimes; offering food to Prabhupada; chanting Prabhupada’s names and bhajans in his glorification, we attain perfection
>
> Simply by serving and worshiping him, Prabhupada has the ultimate ultimo super mystic super potency to magically transform us all into the highest level self-realized nitya-mukta parishad (eternally liberated associate of God). It will please God so much you’ll be liberated without delay if you make Prabhupada your life and soul. Nothing else is needed or even matters. Then, on leaving our bodies, we will go live with and serve Prabhupada eternally as his menial servants. Until then we should pray to Prabhupada for he can see and hear us, he can reveal himself to us in dreams or through others. By revealing our hearts and minds to him as we beg for one drop of his divine mercy, our ever well-wisher will then grant us the boon of everlasting bliss in service to his lotus nectarean feet.

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17

Jaiva Dharma

In a comment to my last post I quoted from Bhaktivinoda's *Jaiva Dharma*, but something about the translation by Narayana Maharaja irked me, it didn't seem like something Bhaktivinoda would say. So I searched online for the original Bengali version, which I couldn't find. I could only find one other English translation, and the part that irked me was confirmed by what appears to me to be exactly what Bhaktivinoda would have written. I hesitate to blame Narayana Maharaja because he translated the original Bengali into Hindi, then it was translated into English by his disciples.

As I've shown before, his English translators aren't very faithful to his actual words and writings, famously his online *Gita* translation of 9.32, the verse that so much ill will was created over between ISKCON and Narayana Maharaja. Narayana Maharaja had claimed Prabhupada's *Gita* made a mistake in grammar which changed the meaning of the verse. In Prabhupada's Gita we find:

O son of Prtha, those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birth–women, vaisyas [merchants], as well as sudras [workers]–can approach the supreme destination.

The grammar makes it seem that Krishna is lumping together women, vaisyas, and sudras as low-born or *papa-yoni*. Narayana Maharaja said that was a mistake, and he was right. Krishna is saying the low-born (papa-yoni), and women, and vaisyas, and sudras. That is the grammatically correct translation, and how the verse has traditionally been translated by everyone but Prabhupada. Saying women, vaisyas, and

sudras are papa-yoni makes no sense considering that papa-yoni explicitly referred to people who weren't born following vedic birth samskaras (rituals). Papa-yoni means a sinful womb, it's a dysphemism (opposite of euphemism), which is an intentionally harsh substitute word. It was commonly used to refer to people who weren't born into Vedic culture. For example, all of us who weren't born from practicing Hindu or Vaishnava backgrounds, would be considered papa-yoni.

After all the ill will created by that "offense" by Narayana Maharaja towards Prabhupada, you would expect to see that verse correctly translated in his *Gita* translation. And it is, in the Hindi edition, which he wrote. But in the English translation, which his followers translated from his Hindi, we get the same mistaken grammar found in Prabhupada's *Gita*. See the link in the previous paragraph for an image of that verse in Narayana Maharaja's English *Gita*. I've been told that has been corrected in the printed version, but the version online which is widely available to everyone, has the mistake.

My point is I can't blame Narayana Maharaja for the mistake in the English edition of *Jaiva Dharma* without seeing the original Hindi version, I looked online, and all I could find was a short truncated version. So I don't know. Anyways, here is the part of *Jaiva Dharma*, chapter 9, I had a problem with since it's such a big problem due to it being a sensitive and important teaching:

> There is no difference between the potency and the possessor of potency." This means that sakti is not a separate object. The Supreme Person who is the master of all potencies is the one truly abiding substance. Sakti is the quality, or inherent function, that is subordinate to His will. You have said that sakti is the embodiment of consciousness, that it possesses will, and that it is beyond the influence of the three qualities of material nature. This is correct, but only insofar as sakti operates fully under the support of a pure conscious entity, and is thus considered identical

> with that powerful entity. **Desire and consciousness depend on the Supreme Being. Desire cannot exist in sakti; rather, sakti acts in accordance with the desire of the Supreme Being. You have the power to move, and when you desire to move, that power will act.**To say “the power is moving” is merely a figure of speech; it actually means that the person who possesses that power is moving.

The part in bold type is what I have a problem with, the idea that we have no inherent ability to desire seems wrong, as I’ve said many times before it’s desire which is the only thing, besides emotion, which we inherently possess as personal characteristics. To me it seemed the word *desire* should have been the word *will* instead, i.e we posses no independent will power, not that we don’t have independent desires.

So I searched online and I couldn’t find the original Bengali version, all I could find was one other translation into English. And in it we find this:

> When it is said that the potency has pure consciousness, that means that because the potency and the master of potencies are not different, therefore, like the master of potencies, the potency also has a form of spiritual consciousness, has desires that are at once fulfilled, and is beyond the touch of the three modes. It is not a mistake to say these things **Will and consciousness are qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By itself, the potency does not possess will, but rather it carries out the will of the Supreme. For example, you have power, and by Your will, your potencies act. If you say, ‘the power acted’, then that means that the possessor of the power was actually behind the action.**

Now that makes sense to me. It's taught in ISKCON that the jiva possesses free will; as I have shown the shastra says that we do not possess free will. Since Narayana Maharaja's English translators are likely ex-ISKCON, it makes sense that they wouldn't accept Bhaktivinoda saying we have no free will. That second translation, paradoxically is from Kusakratha Das, a Prabhupada disciple. The thing about him is that while he was a member of ISKCON, he was a bit of an independent, which is why his books weren't supported by ISKCON'S BBT. He did what he wanted, so it makes sense that he wouldn't toe the party line when it came to his translations. The idea that we have free will but no free desire, is self-contradictory. You have to have free desire to have free will, but you don't necessarily have free will if you have free desire. Will is the ability to carry out your desire, the shastra teaches how to change your desires, but they make it clear you have no free will.

It can seem that if you don't have free will then you can't have free desire. For example: if I desire to go to the market tomorrow, and then I go, wasn't that my free will since it was based on by freedom of desire?

Because desire and will are closely related, so much of what we do is because of a desire to do it. When I say we have freedom of desire, I mean when it comes to desires that aren't specific to the moment. For example: if you desire to go out to dinner tonite that is paramatma giving you that desire. Your liking going out to dinner in general, is the bigger picture, that's your own inherent desire. General "big picture" desires are usually your own inherent desires, more detailed common everyday desires are paramatma directing you. Generally, desires which are not moving you to do something, are your own. You desire to eat and enjoy food, that is your own inherent desire. But if you desire to eat right now, and have some tacos, that is paramatma.

I don't know which word Bhaktivinoda used, but there are Sanskrit words that can mean either will or desire. For example from the Sanskrit dictionary we find the common word *iccha*:

इच्छा icchA f. want

इच्छा icchA f. will

इच्छा icchA f. wish

इच्छा icchA f. willingness

इच्छा icchA f. desire

Also in Hindi it means the same thing, from the Hindi dictionary:

इच्छा **icchā** noun

bent (f)
will (f)
wish (f)
yearning (f)
accord (f)
appetite (f)
care (f)
notion (f)
readiness (f)
willing (f)
wishfulness (f)
wishing (f)
volition (f)
stomach (f)
desire (f)

It's likely the word used in the *Jaiva Dharma* is *iccha*, if not another common word meaning both will or desire is *abhilasa* in Hindi and *abhilasita* in Sanskrit. In Bengali *iccha* also means will or desire. There are more words that mean desire or will, irādā in Bengali, for instance.

I know this may all seem very pedantic, but it's such an important point to understand for the development of self-realization. The fact that ISKCON has very aggressively promoted the idea of free will, and possibly Narayana Maharaja's sangha as well, needs to be exposed for the apasiddhanta it is. As I've shown in my previous posts, there is nothing in shastra which backs up the idea of free will, and much to refute it. You

cannot become self-realized as long as you think we have free will, we need to understand our ontological relationship with Radha Krishna in order to enter into complete and full direct realization:

Bhagavad Gita:

9.10

mayadhyakshena prakritih / suyate sa-caracaram
hetunanena kaunteya / jagad viparivarttate

Prakriti (comprises everything in the universe/sub-atomic energy) works under my supervision, *mayadhyakshena prakritih*, **completely controlling all of creation**, *suyate sa-caracaram*. **This is how the universe works son of Kunti**, *hetunanena kaunteya jagad viparivarttate*.

13.30

prakrityaiva ca karmani / kriyamanani sarvasah
yah pasyati tathatmanam / akarttaram sa pasyati

All activities taking place, in all respects, are performed by prakriti, *prakrtyaiva ca karmani kriyamanani sarvasah*. **Who sees**, *yah pasyati*, **that the atma (human soul) is not the doer**, *atmanam akarttaram*, **he sees**, *sah pasyati*.

18.59-61:

yad ahankaram asritya / na yotsya iti manyase
mithyaiva vyavasayas te / prakritis tvam niyokshyati

You were thinking that you will not fight, *na yotsya iti manyase*. **But that is due to your misconception of your self and reality**, *yad ahankaram asritya* . **That resolution was in vain**, *mithyaiva vyavasayas te*, **prakriti will engage you (make you fight)**, *prakritis tvam niyokshyati*.

svabhava-jena kaunteya / nibaddhah svena karmana
kartum necchasi yan mohat / karishyasy avaso ‘pi tat

Your will not to act is illusory, *kartum necchasi yan mohat*. **Bound by actions**, *nibaddhah svena karmana*, **born of your nature son of Kunti**, *svabhava-jena kaunteya*, **helpless, you will act** *karishyasy avaso ‘pi tat*.

isvarah sarva-bhutanam / hrid-dese ‘rjuna tishthati
bhramayan sarva-bhutani / yantrarudhani mayaya

The supreme controller is at the heart of all beings Arjuna, *isvarah sarva-bhutanam hrid-dese ‘rjuna tishthati*, **driving the movements of all living beings**, *bhramayan sarva-bhutani*, **who are mounted on the machine of his universal potency**,yantrarudhani mayaya..

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18

Don't you forget about me

This is a reply to bhavaprema’s comment to the Bare Necessities post.

Bhavaprema wrote:

> What else is needed to learn in life except love? How can love only be a small part of what we need to learn from our experiences? Krishna is speaking of love as the only qualification to be in relation with Him/Her throughout the Gita. I was always with the understanding that Krishna wants us to be conscious of Him/Her and develop a loving relationship. Why else would we need to experience pain, suffering, heartbreak?
>
> I can see God all around me and within me…but hardly see the purpose behind the experiences I’m forced to encounter until after they’ve occurred…and that is only partial. Sometimes I have communion with God, yet most the time the relationship seems to have vanished. Krishna is a most interesting person…to make a grand understatement. Krishna says He only wants love from His devotee. If love is the bare necessity, then what is beyond love in life? What are these other things so necessary to learn in life?

Vedanta isn’t like Christianity. For most Christians all that is asked of them is to accept Jesus as God and love him—then you’re saved and assured a place in heaven, everyone else is going to hell.

Vedanta is also about loving God, but that’s seen as a natural outcome of self-realization. On a simple level there is a similarity to the Christian conception of salvation. Bhakti, devotion, is asked of you in both traditions as a prerequisite for salvation, But Vedanta stresses jñāna (spiritual knowledge) and vijñāna (experience of that knowledge) along with bhakti. The bhakti traditions are completely different then Christianity in that they incorporate all the teachings found in Vedanta on self-realization. The goal is an intimate relationship of love with God, whereas for Christians the goal lacks the profound intimacy Vedanta teaches, it lacks the teaching of jñāna which leads to the vijñāna necessary for that intimacy. The shastras contain detailed information on the true nature of God, our world and our relationship with both—the purpose of which is to aide us in becoming self-realized, thereby enabling us to enter into an intimate relationship with God.

The love of a Christian for God is not the same type of love Vedanta is teaching about. The Christian idea is love in the same way a young child loves a parent. In Vedanta love of God is also similar to human love, but it’s more intimate, we are asked to mature beyond a childish understanding of God, ourselves and our surroundings; we are asked to become fully educated on the true nature of ourselves and reality; we are asked to reach our highest potential for our relationship with God. Love is part of that, but there is more.

The love a child feels for it’s parent is still love, but the child isn’t able to experience a relationship of love like a fully mature, experienced and educated adult can. A 6 year old doesn’t have the emotional, intellectual or experiential abilities to satisfy an adult. As you get older and more experienced you seek out more from people in relationships (not counting the desire for youthful beauty). When you were 6 years old you were happy with friends your own age, when you’re 30 you wouldn’t be happy if you could only have relationships with people who never grew past the mental, emotional and experiential age of a 6 year old.

Vedanta is telling us we need to reach our full self-realized potential as adults in our relationship with God. That entails learning the true nature of

God, our world and our relationship with both. Then we need to gradually get used to living in full knowledge and awareness of that truth, i.e. God is in control of everyone and everything in every way, especially within ourselves and our mind. That's a very different vision of reality then what you are used to experiencing. You are used to seeing reality as full of independent agents; you're used to identifying with your mind and thoughts; you're used to being alone in your body; you're used to thinking you are in control of your mind, thoughts and movements; you're used to thinking everyone else is also in control of what they do. All of that is false, it's an illusion. This is what Krishna says he wants from you:

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.13.14

> etāvān yoga ādiṣṭo
> mac-chiṣyaiḥ sanakādibhiḥ
> sarvato mana ākṛṣya
> mayy addhāveśyate yathā
>
> etāvān — actually this; yogaḥ — yoga system; ādiṣṭaḥ — instructed; mat-śiṣyaiḥ — by My devotees; sanaka-ādibhiḥ — headed by Sanaka-kumāra; sarvataḥ — from all sides; manaḥ — the mind; ākṛṣya — withdrawing; mayi — in Me; addhā — directly; āveśyate — is absorbed; yathā — accordingly.
>
> The actual yoga system as taught by My devotees, headed by Sanaka-kumāra, is simply this: Having withdrawn the mind from all other objects, one should directly and appropriately absorb it in Me.

That translation is from Hridayananda Goswami and whoever else was involved for the 11th canto of the BBT's Bhagavatam. While there is nothing wrong with it, it doesn't get to the full meaning.

Krishna is actually telling us that through the mind we should disengage from an illusory conception of reality: *sarvato*: "from all sides, in every direction, everywhere, entirely, completely, thoroughly"; *mana ākṛṣya*:

“withdraw the mind.”

The word *āveśyate* comes from *aveśa* or *āvēśḥ*; here are the dictionary definitions:

> **āvēśḥ:**
>
> 1 Entering into, entrance; आवेशं कृ Pt. 1 to enter or infuse oneself into.-2 Taking possession of, influence, exercise; स्मय˚ influence of pride R.5.19; so मदन˚, क्रोध˚, भय˚ &c.-3 Intentness, devotedness to an object, complete absorption in one wish or idea.

Krishna is not just saying “withdraw the mind from all other objects and absorb it in me.” That is too simple and can be misunderstood, which is exactly what Hridayananda does in his purport:

> The word yathā (“accordingly” or “properly”) indicates that like Uddhava one should hear directly from Lord Kṛṣṇa or His bona fide representative and directly (addhā) fix the mind in Lord Kṛṣṇa.

That makes it seem Krishna is only advising us to avoid mundane topics and focus on topics about Krishna and Vedanta.

The idea is to enter into a state of awareness where you see everything, including your mind, as a part of, absorbed in, and possessed by Krishna. The idea is to change your vision from seeing your internal and external reality as independent agents, to seeing everything as a direct manifestation of Krishna’s constant presence and complete control.

A few verses later Krishna says:

> yāvan nānārtha-dhīḥ puṁso
> na nivarteta yuktibhiḥ
> jāgarty api svapann ajñaḥ
> svapne jāgaraṇaṁ yathā
>
> yāvat — as long as; nānā — of many; artha — values;

dhīḥ — the conception; puḿsaḥ — of a person; na — does not; nivarteta — subside; yuktibhiḥ — by the appropriate methods (described by Me); jāgarti — being awake; api — although; svapan — sleeping, dreaming; ajñaḥ — one who does not see things as they are; svapne — in a dream; jāgaraṇam — being awake; yathā — just as.

According to My instructions, one should fix the mind on Me alone. If, however, one continues to see many different values and goals in life rather than seeing everything within Me, then although apparently awake, one is actually dreaming due to incomplete knowledge, just as one may dream that one has wakened from a dream.

The word for word translation is more accurate and literal (this is the BBT version) but the inexact translation is good in that it gets the point Krishna is referring to. The next verse continues the same idea:

asattvād ātmano ‘nyeṣāḿ
bhāvānāḿ tat-kṛtā bhidā
gatayo hetavaś cāsya
mṛṣā svapna-dṛśo yathā

asattvāt — because of lacking factual existence; ātmanaḥ — from the Supreme Personality of Godhead; anyeṣām — of others; bhāvānām — states of existence; tat — by them; kṛtā — created; bhidā — difference or separation; gatayaḥ — destinations such as going to heaven; hetavaḥ — fruitive activities, which are the cause of future rewards; ca — also; asya — of the living entity; mṛṣā — false; svapna — of a dream; dṛśaḥ — of the seer; yathā — just as.

Those states of existence that are conceived of as

separate from the Supreme Personality of Godhead have no actual existence, although they create a sense of separation from the Absolute Truth. Just as the seer of a dream imagines many different activities and rewards, similarly, because of the sense of an existence separate from the Lord's existence, the living entity falsely performs fruitive activities, thinking them to be the cause of future rewards and destinations.

This isn't a very literal translation, especially the translation of *hetavaḥ* — "fruitive activities, which are the cause of future rewards." In all other instances of it's use in the Vedabase it's translated as "causes." Krishna is saying we need to understand how this world actually works. Our actions or will are not the cause or in control of what we will experience. The mentality of not seeing the constant presence of Krishna, internally and externally, not seeing Krishna in full and complete control over everything in every way—that vision of reality is like a dream—in a dream you aren't fully conscious to awakened life, you don't even know you're dreaming, you think you're awake and fully aware and conscious of reality.

While love is grand, Krishna is asking us to live a life of full knowledge and complete comprehension and cognizance of the reality. We are asked to live in the real world. The problem is that we are born into a dream world. We are born into delusion.

Bhagavad-gita 7.27-28

iccha-dvesa-samutthena
dvandva-mohena bharata
sarva-bhutani sammoham
sarge yanti parantapa

iccha-dvesa-samutthena, desire and aversion rising from, *dvandva-mohena bharata* delusion of duality Arjuna, *sarva-bhutani sammoham*, all people are mesmerized, *sarge yanti parantapa*, creation enter

Arjuna

All jivas at their very conception are mesmerized by the delusion of duality which leads to the rise of desire and aversion.

When the jiva is born it is deluded by the nature of reality. Everything seems to be going on independently from a central controlling power, plan and purpose. The jiva acquires a dualistic vision of reality. It sees itself as separate from everything else and acting under it's own power and will. By that deluded vision of reality it becomes attracted or repulsed to the variety it experiences.

yesam tv anta-gatam papam
jananam punya-karmanam
te dvandva-moha-nirmukta
bhajante mam drdha-vratah

yesam tv anta-gatam papam however those whose misfortune has finally gone away, *jananam punya-karmanam*, those people actions are pure and virtuous, *te dvandva-moha-nirmukta*, they are free from the delusion of duality, *bhajante mam drdha-vratah* they adore or worship me with a fixed vow or determination.

However, those whose misfortune has finally gone away, their actions are pure and virtuous being free from the delusion of duality, they are steadfast in their worship and adoration of me.

When the jiva becomes free from the vision of duality, from seeing a separation between God and itself, or between God and anything else, then the jiva lives in reality and it's life is lived in fulfillment of it's purpose, i.e. to be in a perfected relationship with God.

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Bare necessities

This is a reply to a comment from bhavaprema to the It’s Just A Spring Clean For The May Queen post.

Bhavaprema asked some really interesting questions, this is my response:

1) How do we learn without free will? Our learning process is beyond our ability to understand because we don’t understand everything about ourselves, and never will. The question of free will doesn’t change that, either way we learn the same. We know that we learn from experience, but besides that, we can’t see the mechanics of the learning process. An analogy would be asking a 5 year old child with no experience or education beyond the average “how does a television work?” All they can say is that they press buttons and it works, if they were a little better educated they could say there are special cameras which are used to film scenes, then those images and sounds are transmitted to the television through wires or through the air. To really understand the details they would need a lot of education in electronics and physics.

Our situation is similar to that, we know that by experiencing something we learn from that experience. The technological details would need an enormous amount of education, not only about the exact scientific nature of our consciousness and mind, but also on exactly how we interact with paramatma. There is no point in learning what would be necessary to learn to understand in technical detail how we learn. The purpose of our lives isn’t to know everything about how we exist, that would take an enormous amount of time and education, and we still wouldn’t understand because

the truth is the dimensions involved with consciousness, mind, and paramatma are beyond our ability to fully understand. We simply don't have access to those dimensions like Krishna does, so our point of reference is lacking.

2) You wrote:

> Life is one big complicated lesson with its purpose to learn compassion and true love.

That's only a small part of what we need to learn. Just like the process of growing up from a child to an adult involves many aspects of a person, so to does evolving towards self-realization and prema-bhakti.

3) You mentioned animals or insects and their ability to do what humans cannot. They seem to have so much "instinctual" knowledge compared to humans. Humans are born so helpless and ignorant, with apparently no abilities or instincts, yet animals and insects often are born with amazing abilities, or show them shortly after birth. All I can say is that not everything in this world is what it appears to be from external vision. As you develop self-realization you will discover that many things in the world that you once thought of in one way, is revealed to be actually something completely different.

> All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players:
> They have their exits and their entrances;
> And one man in his time plays many parts

There is one way of looking at the world which God has designed for those lacking self-realization, and then there is the truth which is revealed as you get closer to God. Eventually, where you once saw only mundane things, you will see God all around you and realize you have always been much closer to God than you ever imagined.

4) You wrote:

> Why does Krsna prefer the “hard school of knocks” for us to learn love? Do we really need to experience the extremes of so-called suffering (holocaust, rape, slavery, oppression, torture, abortion, etc…) to learn how to love? I am just not currently capable of explaining this to others. I just don’t want to be that person to say, “well…the lord works in mysterious ways.”

I refer you to the previous answer — not everything in the world is at it seems to your external vision. God is much more involved in our world than most people realize, by God’s design, until they advance in self-realization. Then they will understand and see that the ideas of: “God must be absent from our world,” or “why doesn’t God reveal himself if he exists,” are about as far away from the truth as you can get. We are literally surrounded by God in so many ways, but until ready we are kept ignorant of all the truths of our world.

And like I said earlier, we aren’t here just to learn love, we have many things to learn, most of them subconsciously. Just like when a child learns to be an adult, but later as adults we can’t explain everything about the maturation process we went through. That’s because so much of it is subtle and subconscious. The less subtle learning, the learning of information, like math, or knowledge of Krishna, is different from life lessons and the maturation process. These things we can learn simply from hearing information and then experiencing the truth it reveals.

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Purporting

This is a response to a few comments from bhavaprema to the Here, There and Everywhere post.

bhavaprema wrote:

> Even though I've heard and read from many sources that the Bhagavatam is to be taken literally (with the exception of a few allegorical instances), I could never accept this answer. It seems the Bhagavatam is filled with metaphorical, allegorical, and literal meanings throughout. The difficulty for most may be the inability to distinguish when something is a literal truth, or other… For instance, in Canto 2.2 the process for realizing and conceiving the presence of Paramatma through meditation is explained. Here is the beginning of the description of Paramatma:

This is what Bhaktivinoda Thakura wrote about symbolism in the Bhagavatam. From *The Bhagavata*:

> Goloka-Vrindavana is realizable in the symbolic Vrindavana that is open to our view in this world by all persons whose Love has been perfected by the mercy of the inhabitants of Transcendental Vraja, and not other-wise. The grossest misunderstanding of the subject of the Vraja Lila of Sri Krishna is inevitable if these considerations are not kept in view.

> In the form of the narrative of the Bhagavatam, the Transcendental Vraja Lila manifests its descent to the plane of our mundane vision in the symbolic shapes resembling those of the corresponding mundane events. If we are disposed, for any reason, to underestimate the transcendental symbolism of the narrative of the Bhagavatam we are unable to avoid unfavorable and hasty conclusions regarding the nature of the highest, the most perfect and the most charming form of the loving service of the Divinity to which all other forms of his service are as the avenues of approach.

And this is what Mahaprabhu said, from *Caitanya Caritamrta* Madhya 24.318:

> krsna-tulya bhagavata — vibhu, sarvasraya
> prati-sloke prati-aksare nana artha kaya
>
> **Srimad-Bhagavatam is as great as Krsna, the Supreme Lord and shelter of everything. In each and every verse of Srimad-Bhagavatam and in each and every syllable, there are various meanings.**

The next sloka you quote is *Srimad Bhagavatam* 2.2.8:

> Others conceive of the Personality of Godhead residing within the body in the region of the heart and measuring only eight inches, with four hands carrying a lotus, a wheel of a chariot, a conchshell and a club respectively

That mentions what some people do, it’s isn’t prescribing that. And you’re right in that it’s meant as a mediation tool, it’s not meant literally. Specifically it’s purpose is to get people used to seeing God within and as a part of themselves, and also getting used to focusing within and seeing

themselves as different from another being within them.

The addition of a specific look and clothes serves two purposes: it makes meditation easier if you have something physical to meditate on; and it helps in learning how to conceive of God as a physical person rather than just as a formless energy field. In the purport Prabhupada seems to miss all that and seems to indicate that he believes that paramatma is literally 8 inches tall and dressed up with the 4 symbols in everyone's heart.

Also Prabhupada writes in the purport:

> The Lord exists as purusa, or the male enjoyer

Purusha doesn't mean "male enjoyer." It can mean: male, man, human, primeval man, supreme being, and a number of other things — but "enjoyer" is not mentioned as a translation. The way Prabhupada words that phrase makes it seem that the lord only enjoys as a man, when in fact God's female form is the higher enjoying form as taught in Gaudiya theology:

Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta Adi 4 133-136:

> I taste the bliss to which the object of love is entitled.
> But the pleasure of Rādhā, the abode of that love, is
> ten million times greater.
>
> My mind races to taste the pleasure experienced by
> the abode, but I cannot taste it, even by My best
> efforts. How may I taste it?
>
> If sometime I can be the abode of that love, only then
> may I taste its joy.
>
> Thinking in this way, Lord Kṛṣṇa was curious to taste
> that love. His eager desire for that love increasingly
> blazed in His heart.

Sri Caitanya Caritamrita Madhya 8.148-9:

apana-madhurye hare apanara mana
apana apani cahe karite alingana

āpanā āpani cāhe karite āliṅganaāpana — own; mādhurye — by sweetness; hare — steals; āpanāra — His own; mana — mind; āpanā — Himself; āpani — He; cāhe — wants; karite — to do; āliṅgana — embracing.

His [Krishna's] sweetness is so attractive that it steals away His own mind. Thus even He wants to embrace Himself.

aparikalita-pūrvaḥ kaś camatkāra-kārī
sphurati mama garīyān eṣa mādhurya-pūraḥ
ayam aham api hanta prekṣya yaṁ lubdha-cetāḥ
sa-rabhasam upabhoktuṁ kāmaye rādhikeva

aparikalita-pūrvaḥ — not previously experienced; kaḥ — who; camatkāra-kārī — causing wonder; sphurati — manifests; mama — My; garīyān — more great; eṣaḥ — this; mādhurya-pūraḥ — abundance of sweetness; ayam — this; aham — I; api — even; hanta — alas; prekṣya — seeing; yam — which; lubdha-cetāḥ — My mind being bewildered; sa-rabhasam — impetuously; upabhoktum — to enjoy; kāmaye — desire; rādhikā iva — like Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

(Upon seeing His own reflection in a bejeweled pillar of His Dvārakā palace, Kṛṣṇa desired to embrace it, saying): “Who manifests an abundance of sweetness greater than Mine, which has never been experienced before and which causes wonder to all? Alas, I Myself, My mind bewildered on seeing this beauty, impetuously desires to enjoy it like Radhika”

Sri Krsna-bhakti-ratna-prakasa by Raghava Pandit Goswami:

> O Balarama, please listen and I will tell You something. One day, taking My flute, My heart full of bliss and My form bending in three places, I went under a kadamba tree and, seeing My own form reflected in a splendid golden platform studded with jewels, I became enchanted. At that moment My heart became filled with the sweet happiness known as conjugal love, which charms the entire world. My heart now desires to become a woman. I yearn to enjoy Myself as a woman.
>
> As the Lord thought in this way, His heart approached itself. From the sweetness of His heart came bliss and from the bliss came Himself, manifested in a second form, a female form of transcendental bliss that could experience the direct perception of Himself.
>
> At that time a goddess, whose form was nectar, whose fair complexion was like a host of lightning flashes, and who was decorated with glittering ornaments, appeared from the Lord’s left side. She is known as Radha, who is half of Krsna’s body, and who is the mistress of all potencies

Sri Caitanya Caritamrita Madhya 8.157,163-164:

> krishnake ahlade, ta’te nama — ‘hladini’
> sei sakti-dvare sukha asvade apani
>
> sei sakti-dvare sukha asvade apanikrsnake — unto Krsna; ahlade — gives delight; ta’te — therefore; nama — the name; hladini — pleasure-giving potency; sei sakti — that potency; dvare — by means of; sukha — joy; asvade — tastes; apani — personally.
>
> **The potency called hladini gives Krsna delight,**

by it, personal joy is experienced.

ananda-cinmaya-rasa-pratibhavitabhis
tabhir ya eva nija-rupataya kalabhih
goloka eva nivasaty akhilatma-bhuto
govindam adi-purusham tam aham bhajami

aham bhajami – I perform bhajana; tam – of that; adi-purusham govindam – original Supreme Person, Sri Govinda; yah – who; eva – certainly; nivasati – resides; goloke – in Goloka-dhama; akhila-atma- bhutah – as the original complete intrinsic form; pratibhavitabhih – for all of His dear associates who act as His counterparts; ananda – in enjoying transcendental, blissful; cinmaya-rasa – spiritual mellows; eva nija-rupataya – with none other than His own internal pleasure potency Sri Radha, who has the bhava of amorous rasa; tabhih kalabhih – together with the expansions of Sri Radha's body (kalas), who act as Her sakhis.

Sri Govinda, who is all-pervading and who exists within the hearts of all, resides in His Goloka-dhama along with Sri Radha, who is the embodiment of His pleasure potency [hladini shakti] and the counterpart of His own spiritual form. She is the epitome of transcendental rasa, and is expert in sixty-four arts. They are also accompanied by the sakhis, who are expansions of Sri Radha's own transcendental body, and who are infused with blissful, spiritual rasa. I worship that original personality, Sri Govinda.

sei mahabhava haya 'cintamani-sara'
krsna-vancha purna kare ei karya tanra

sei — that; maha-bhava — great emotion; haya — is; cintamani — wish fulfilling gem; sara — essence ; krsna-vancha — the desires of Krsna; purna — complete; kare –does; ei — this; karya — business; tanra — Her.

That great emotion of Srimati Radharani is the essence of chintamani (wish fulfilling gem). Her function is to complete Krishna's desires.

Prabhupada also wrote in the purport:

> …although there is no comparing Him to any male form in the material world.

That statement makes no sense to me. The male forms the lord appears as *can* be compared to human forms in our world, that is the whole point of his human lila — to appear human. How much of a difference could there be between any normal looking human? If they are youthful, healthy, and beautiful, they are similar.

From bhavaprema:

> Here are some more verses on this topic where the verses seem crystal clear but Prabhupada's purports seem to take on a different meaning (or maybe it's just my lack of realization).
>
> Bhaktivedanta VedaBase: Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 2.5.19
>
> kārya-kāraṇa-kartṛtve
> dravya-jñāna-kriyāśrayāḥ
> badhnanti nityadā muktaṁ
> māyinaṁ puruṣaṁ guṇāh
>
> kārya — effect; kāraṇa — cause; kartṛtve — in activities; dravya — material; jñāna — knowledge; kriyā-āśrayāḥ —

> manifested by such symptoms; badhnanti — conditions; nityadā — eternally; muktam — transcendental; māyinam — affected by material energy; puruṣam — the living entity; guṇāḥ — the material modes.
>
> These three modes of material nature, being further manifested as matter, knowledge and activities, put the eternally transcendental living entity under conditions of cause and effect and make him responsible for such activities.
>
> Purport here.
>
> “Responsible for such activities” does not seem to be in the Sanskrit. In the purport, Prabhupada describes the living entities as “conditioned actors” with a “sense of responsibility” for cause and effect of his/her actions. This seems to not make sense when considering the following verses.

“Responsible for such activities” was added, by Prabhupada or maybe his editors. I’m not sure how much his editors added or changed, if any, to Prabhupada’s words in the Bhagavatam. But the part you quoted of his purport, saying it doesn’t make sense to you — I don’t see why, i.e. conditioned people do have a sense of responsibility for cause and effect of their actions because that’s the nature of their conditioning — they think they’re in control of what they do, and therefore they think they’re one of the causes for the reactions to their actions.

You then wrote:

> Bhaktivedanta VedaBase: Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 2.5.20
>
> sa eṣa bhagavān liṅgais
> tribhir etair adhokṣajaḥ
> svalakṣita-gatir brahman
> sarveṣāṁ mama ceśvarah

.

saḥ — He; eṣaḥ — this; bhagavān — the Personality of Godhead; liṅgaiḥ — by the symptoms; tribhiḥ — by the three; etaiḥ — by all these; adhokṣajaḥ — the Superseer Transcendence; su-alakṣita — veritably unseen; gatiḥ — movement; brahman — O Nārada; sarveṣām — of everyone; mama — mine; ca — as also; īśvaraḥ — the controller.

O Brāhmaṇa Nārada, the Superseer, the transcendent Lord, is beyond the perception of the material senses of the living entities because of the above-mentioned three modes of nature. But He is the controller of everyone, including me.

Purport here

I’m not sure what impersonalism (the entire purport) has to do with the actual verse. Am I missing something? However, Brahmaji is declaring that all living beings are controlled by the Superseer, even himself.

Prabupada’s purport fits the sloka when you understand he’s speaking only to the first part, specifically on the concept of God as *Adhoksaja*.

There is a story in *Harivamsha* about the origin of that name which Rupa Goswami quotes in *Laghu Bhagavatamrta*:

Resting in a cart-wheel cradle, (child) Krishna killed a cruel and powerful demoness named Putana who, pretending to be full of maternal affection, offered Him her breast smeared with poison. When the residents of Vraja saw the demoness was killed, they exclaimed: `This child is born again. For this reason, Krishna is known as adhokshaja.

> The commentary explains: "`Adhah' means `beneath', `aksha' means `the cart-wheel', and `ja' means `born again'. In this way they said the word `adhokshaja' (He who is born again under the cart-wheel)."

But that's not the only translation of *Adhoksaja*, and it isn't the meaning that Prabhupada was commenting on. *Aksha* or *Aksa* can also mean sensual perception or eyes, *Ja* can mean born from, belonging to, connected with, and similar words. That would make Adhoksaja translate in a simple way as — beyond your visual or sensual perception.

Prabhupada's purport was all about how God may be present in an impersonal (I think he meant disembodied) form everywhere, but the higher understanding is that God also has a personal (I think he meant physical embodiment) form.

You then wrote:

> Bhaktivedanta VedaBase: Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 2.5.21
>
> kālaṁ karma svabhāvaṁ ca
> māyeśo māyayā svayā
> ātman yadṛcchayā prāptaṁ
> vibubhūṣur upādade
>
> kālam — eternal time; karma — the fate of the living entity; svabhāvam — nature; ca — also; māyā — potency; īśaḥ — the controller; māyayā — by the energy; svayā — of His own; ātman (ātmani) — unto His Self; yadṛcchayā — independently; prāptam — being merged in; vibubhūṣuḥ — appearing differently; upādade — accepted for being created again.
>
> The Lord, who is the controller of all energies, thus creates, by His own potency, eternal time, the fate of all living entities, and their particular nature, for which they were created, and He again merges them independently.

> In this verse Prabhupada seems to translate “karma” as “the fate of all living entities”. This is quite different than the other definitions of karma that he has used elsewhere. However, the purport seems to also have a life of its own, diverting from the context of the actual verse.
>
> Your thoughts?

Karma can mean different things, so it’s translation should be dependent on context, which in this context as fate is correct. But I don’t get the rest of the translation, this is how I would translate it:

> kalam karma svabhavam ca
> mayeso mayaya svaya
> atman yadrcchaya praptam
> vibubhusur upadade
>
> kalam — time; karma — fate, destiny ; svabhavam — inherent nature; ca — and; maya — supernatural power; isah — possessing; mayaya — by maya or supernatural power; svaya — of His own; atman (atmani) — unto His Self; yadrcchaya — by chance, by sweet will; praptam — attains; vibubhusuh — unlimitedly all-powerful. all-pervasive, Brahman; upadade — accepts, perceives, experiences, gains, acquires, receives
>
> **kalam karma svabhavam ca**: In time the nature of fate [is revealed] and
>
> **mayeso mayaya svaya**: by the lords own supernatural power [maya shakti]
>
> **atman yadrcchaya praptam**: by [the lords] sweet will, by chance [the soul's good fortune], the soul attains,

vibubhusur upadade: perceives, and experiences (acquires and gains) the unlimitedly all-powerful, all-pervasive Brahman

That translation makes sense in the light of the previous few verses, it’s the conclusion to a line of teaching before moving on to another. Prabhupada’s translation seems unlikely to me.

His purport seems to go into his idea of fate and his conception of free will, and touches on creation and related ideas. So I don’t think it’s entirely unrelated to the verse. It’s not uncommon for purports to be a jumping off point for a variety of topics.

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The idiot contest

Part 1 — Beating a Dead Horse

Over at Dandavats, ISKCON's main blogging outlet, there has been a long debate in the comments to a post of a lecture given by Urmila Dasi from a few months ago in Mayapur. She was there for the annual GBC meetings held every year around Gaura Purnima. Urmila Dasi is one of the leading lady disciples of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada still working in ISKCON. She has her own Wikipedia page like many other leading members of ISKCON. She is known mostly for her work as an educator in ISKCON, having had a lot to do with running ISKCON schools and developing ISKCON's educational system. She is also known for being the potential first woman to be given the role of a guru in ISKCON's history. There have been talks by ISKCON leadership for years, and even a resolution I think, about giving her the go ahead to initiate disciples. But due to various reasons, that hasn't come about yet, mostly having to do with passionate opposal from many ISKCON members for letting a woman take the role of guru. And not just from men, many women are also opposed. We'll get to that later in the "Idiot Contest" part of this post below.

First though I'm going to comment on Urmila and the lecture she gave. Don't get the idea that the title of this post refers to Urmila, she's a well educated and intelligent lady, with many skills. The title refers to the debate in the comments to her lecture, where it appears people are vying to see who can appear to be the bigger idiot. But first about Urmila's lecture.

The gist of her lecture was all about her passion — ISKCON schools. What immediately struck me as odd and hypocritical was her passionate claim to be devoted to fulfilling Prabhupada's vision for ISKCON gurukulas (schools), yet in her vision for ISKCON schooling and for the schools she has helped run, she directly and purposefully violates Prabhupada's vision.

This is a phenomenon we see all the time in ISKCON or with Prabhupada's followers in general — they give lip service to being 1000% devoted to Prabhupada as the perfect teacher. How often do we hear them speak as if Prabhupada was empowered by God in everything he taught, yet ignore the parts they don't like? How often do we see them teach the world that whatever Prabhupada taught is the gold standard of what should be done in life in general, and how ISKCON should specifically proceed, yet don't follow what they don't like? Answer — endlessly. That is, when they are not quoting some other guru from ISKCON with a similar vision due to being a parrot of Prabhupada, and then not following through with what they present as the highest ideal.

I'm talking about what Prabhupada said about his vision for ISKCON schools vs how they are actually run. They simply ignore the parts they don't like and pretend Prabhupada never said them. Prabhupada was against girls going to school, he wanted them taught simple reading, writing, and arithmetic at home. And then have them married by the beginning of puberty, by 14 at the latest. He wanted them to spend most of their schooling on learning home economics, i.e. cooking, sewing, etc. to prepare them for a life of servitude towards their future husbands. You can read here what Prabhupada said about girls and schooling.

Urmila and most all other devoted followers of Prabhupada teach the world that whatever Prabhupada taught was God's instructions for human society at large. They especially reinforce that ideology in ISKCON lectures, where Prabhupada's teachings are constantly brought up as the ultimate and perfect example for all to follow. If anyone disagrees with anyone else on any topic the first thing they do is search for a teaching from Prabhupada to back up their point of view. That is standard ISKCON social interaction. Like "Confucius say" to traditional Chinese, or papal

infallibility, or worship of the founder acharyas of America by constitutional patriots, “Prabhupada said” is the most oft-repeated and definitive phrase, as the founder-acharya of ISKCON is promoted as the final and perfect word on just about everything. But the reality is that many of the things he said are ignored by those same people as if he never said them.

That hypocrisy is especially evident in Urmila’s lecture, yet she seems blithely unaware of it and centers her entire vision around not only promoting Prabhupada’s supposed perfect vision of ISKCON schooling, but also his perfect prophecy and vision of how ISKCON schooling can “change the world.” Not only does she seem blithely unaware of the hypocrisy in the difference between what Prabhupada actually taught and what ISKCON leaders promote in his name, she also seems blithely unaware of the hypocrisy in claiming that in her future and expanded version of ISKCON gurukulas around the world, that following Prabhupada’s paradigm will somehow magically produce radically different results then what we have seen in the past.

She seems, like so many of the rest of ISKCON leadership to have her head in the clouds. They tend to have the idea that whatever Prabhupada said about the future of ISKCON and the world — was prophetic and perfect. They mold their vision of ISKCON and the world according to that, and then endlessly preach it to others as if it is Krishna and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s pure vision — which needs endless sacrifice and dedication of Prabhupada’s followers to work tirelessly at bringing that vision into reality, i.e. ISKCONify the world. They tend to spend lots of time speaking about the same outdated ideologies which have proven to be mostly failures in ISKCON, e.g. gurukulas; introducing varnashrama in ISKCON; and “preaching to the intelligent class of people” is a phrase you hear a lot, meaning the intellectual elite, as if that class of people in society will accept with open arms Prabhupada’s Taliban-lite vision of the perfect society if only it is presented “intelligently.”

Urmila also presented standard ISKCON boilerplate about the absolute need to submit to and become a slave to a guru, and other typical ISKCON nonsense about how no one is a very good person unless they are a

devotee — all meant to push the standard ISKCON exploitation paradigm, i.e. A. — *you're not a really good person if you're not a devotee*, leading to B. — *you're not a good devotee unless you're a slave to a guru*, leading to the revelation of C. — *unless I'm a slave to a guru, God will not save me from hellish existence because I'm not worthy*.

Part 2 — The Idiot Contest

Now you would think that such a standard ISKCON boilerplate lecture by Urmila wouldn't be seen as controversial, and therefore in the comments people would either praise her or add on to what she spoke about. Well, one thing you should know — you will never be surprised by overestimating the idiocy of Prabhupada's fanatic followers. What followed was a hilariously idiotic battle, including insults and vicious attacks on people's personal lives, all kinds of holier-than-thou posing, and my favorite funny common devotee tactic — feigning self-deprecation in an act of passive aggression. Here is a sample from the comments to Urmila's lecture:

> Thank you, Tungavidya devi dasi, for setting the record straight. You are one hundred percent correct in your definition of a Vrajavasi. I have zero qualification to be here, but somehow or other, by the willful mercy of my spiritual master, I have been living here for the past fifteen years. Even then, it could rightly be said that I am not in Vrindavan, because my consciousness is all over the universe. Urmila devi, however, doesn't see the faults, and therefore she spoke the way she did (…) Anyway, I didn't mean to write so much. I only meant to thank you for exposing me as a pretender. Please feel free to continue.

What were they fighting over you may wonder? At 122 comments up till now, they were hilariously arguing over whether or not it was appropriate for women to give lectures on spirituality when a man is present. Because Urmila's lecture was in front of not only many men, but many senior

ISKCON leaders, some people were very offended and set out to severely chastise Urmila for: being a failure at “Stri Dharma;” just wanting attention; wanting to dominate over men; and of course the pièce de résistance of insults in ISKCON circles — being told she was rejecting Prabhupada by not perfectly following his teachings on what she should do or not do in every aspect of her life.

What followed were various people joining in on both sides of the heated argument. And it wasn’t a man who started the argument, the angry critic claimed to be a disciple of Prabhupada, named Bhaktilata. It ended up with women and men arguing on both sides of the issue. The main defender of Urmila, besides Urmila herself, was the iconic voice of the Dandavats comments section, Akruranatha Das, a Prabhupada disciple and lawyer from Silicon Valley in California. He got into a hilariously vicious argument (his attackers were insulting and vicious) over the meaning of a particular quote from Prabhupada. Here it is:

> Regarding lecturing by woman devotees: I have informed you that in the service of the Lord there is no distinction of caste or creed, color, or sex. In the Bhagavad-gita, the Lord especially mentions that a woman who has taken seriously is also destined to reach Him. We require a person who is in the knowledge of Krishna, that is the only qualification of a person speaking. It doesn’t matter what he is. Materially a woman may be less intelligent than a man, but spiritually there is no such distinction. Because spiritually everyone is pure soul.
>
> In the absolute plane there is no such gradation of higher and lower. If a woman can lecture nicely and to the point, we should hear her carefully. That is our philosophy. **But if a man can speak better than a woman, the man should be given first preference.** But even though a woman is less intelligent, a sincere soul should be given proper

> chance to speak, because we want so many preachers, both men and women.

Bhaktilata claimed that this line from that letter by Prabhupada meant that Urmila shouldn't have given the lecture: **"But if a man can speak better than a woman, the man should be given first preference"**. She said it didn't matter that Urmila was invited to speak, that she should have denied the request because of there being "more qualified men present," and therefore she is a failure at following "Stri Dharma" and therefore unworthy to be listened to.

Stri Dharma? That made me laugh. Stri Dharma is an outdated concept, part of ancient varnashrama-dharma on the duties of women in society from the beliefs of ancient India. That society was completely different from modern society, women were much more vulnerable to exploitation and violence compared to modern society. Spiritual education was left to the men, which back when books were extremely rare meant that to be spiritually educated you needed to study with a guru. That would require a stint of service to the guru in his ashram, or money. Since women would be expected to learn how to devote themselves to taking care of their families in that non-technological world, that meant they had to learn a lot of essential skills, unlike today, where everything can easily be paid for, e.g. clothes and other household needs, and food cultivation. Therefore women generally didn't have the time to go off to an ashram. They learned how to be good housewives and then married young, usually by 16. Not all women were in that mold, but most were. And not just in India, it was standard for most of the ancient world.

That standard role for women originated because in a society with lax enforcement of law and order, like ancient societies, the women were always at a distinct disadvantage. When it came to handling money, or doing anything which left them open to men if they were away from the protection of their family, home or village, they could be robbed or enslaved or taken advantage of, or killed, much easier than a man could have been. The rules or rather the suggestions for women collectively known as *Stri Dharma* were thought up with that in mind. It was truly

based on physically protecting the weaker gender from being exploited or harmed by the stronger.

Plus, due to so much interpolation of books like *Manu-samhita*, whatever they say has to be taken with a grain of salt (see here and also here for info on interpolations in Manu-Samhita). Nevertheless, ISKCON was supposed to be about representing the teachings of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the founders of the Gaudiya sampradaya. Mahaprabhu rejected varnashrama, not in principle, but he rejected having it as part of his mission and teachings. His mission was to teach his particular brand of Bhakti-yoga, not to teach varnashrama-dharma (the totality of ancient Vedic culture).

Today that is even more relevant, varnashrama is long gone. Society cannot be changed into some fantasy reinvention of ancient India just because Prabhupada fantasized about it. The dharma of ancient India was based on that ancient way of life, today's way of life is vastly different. Women are no longer in need of the protection that they needed in ancient times, nor is it difficult for them to become educated, materially or spiritually. Stri Dharma is anachronistic, and it was never part of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's mission to make a point of teaching women how to act within ancient varnashrama ideals. Nor was it his mission to set up private enclaves of Luddites where everyone was made to live some Vedic fantasy, like "The Village" by M. Night Shyamalan. Which evidently is what ISKCON is always talking about as varnashrama, their great unfinished project — trying to turn the clocks of time back, way way way back. Seriously guys, get a grip.

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22

Everybody was kung-fu fighting

This is a response to sridhar visvanath’s comment to the Double Trouble post. Sridhar wrote:

> My friend gave a good analogy: (when we were discussing about vaidhi sadhana leading to Raganuga) Suppose I am interested in playing tennis, I start playing by the rules, slowly I get used to it. I love the game and start playing better and better. At a point, the rules come in the way. Great players are known for breaking rules and going beyond. Liberation of sorts. Since i have tried my hand at tennis, I can see that. How a shot feels right, just raw instinct.

That’s a common idea held by bhaktas about vaidhi and raganuga, probably because it’s taught in ISKCON. But it gives a wrong impression about vaidhi and raganuga.

Vaidhi bhakti is specifically described by Rupa Goswami as bhakti practice that’s inspired by logic and the promise of shastra for attaining liberation from suffering and samsara. They think that their spiritual advancement is determined by how closely they follow the rules and regulations in shastra and the instructions of a guru. They think that if they chant a certain amount they will get a certain result, and that if they don’t chant that amount they won’t get the result. It’s all in the following of the rule. The same goes for all of their sadhana.

That’s why in ISKCON or in similar groups they gauge a person’s spiritual advancement by how strictly they follow the rules and regulations of shastra and from the guru. Even the gurus are expected to follow all the rules and regulations or they will be demoted, or even kicked out of ISKCON. On various websites and blogs you can constantly see devotees criticizing and judging other devotees by how strict they are in following 4 regulative principles, 16 rounds of japa, going to mangala arati, avoiding all interaction with anything in any way that isn’t sadhana or directly serving the guru or the organization, and of course preaching or working full-time or at least as much as humanly possible to “spread Krishna consciousness.” Prabhupada fanatics and ISKCON members also criticize any other group or guru who they see as not surrendered to Prabhupada (*the* guru of all other gurus in their opinion) in whatever way they can find. They consider that not following any of those directives to be the cause of a denigration of consciousness from spiritual to material, from pleasing God to displeasing God, from ascending to heaven to descending to hell. They think that they are buying their way into God’s good graces and will get rewarded after death by a higher birth or in heaven (Vaikuntha).

Raganuga bhakti is described by Rupa Goswami as bhakti that is inspired by raga, by affection for and the desire to please Krishna. They may strictly follow the rules and regulations or they may not because they may not understand what level they’re on and may believe they will displease Krishna if they don’t follow all the rules and regulations. But, unlike vaidhi bhaktas they won’t feel dependent on strictly following the rules and regulations for Krishna’s mercy. They believe they already have Krishna’s mercy and it’s just a matter of time before they get closer to Krishna. They have faith that Krishna wants to bring them closer and that rules and regulations aren’t important enough for Krishna to base their fate on.

The real difference between vaidhi and raganuga is faith. People with weak or no faith tend to be vaidhi bhaktas. That’s simply because to have the raganuga mood you need to actually truly believe in Krishna and what he teaches.

Sometimes we see vaidhi bhaktas who consider themselves to be

raganuga bhaktas. They will usually have the same type of vaidhi mentality of seeing their advancement based on following rules and regulations — just a different set of rules and regulations than what most vaidhi bhaktas follow. They still think they are utterly dependent on a guru for their advancement, often thinking they're even more dependent on a guru than vaidhi bhaktas believe to be. Also they tend to see archana (deity worship) as very important. They often or usually see themselves as dependent on various initiations, on various meditations, on vigorously studying rasa lila writings, and often also in leading an ascetic lifestyle, but not always.

Strangely, from what I've seen they often don't consider Vaishnava Vedanta (Bhagavatam and Gita, etc.) philosophy to be very important to study, thinking themselves above it. They often see lila as the only important thing to study. They tend to have a poor understanding of Bhagavat philosophy due to that lack of interest. Because of that it's not uncommon that they lose even more faith over time because they're not getting the result they had hoped for, e.g. bhava.

Past acharyas have stated that vaidhi doesn't lead to raganuga. That may sound counter-intuitive, but it actually makes sense. Raganuga is predicated on strong faith, without it you can't be a true raganuga bhakta. The only way to have strong faith is by Krishna revealing the truth of his existence along with the revelatory nature of shastra. People without that revelation can be persuaded by rational and logical arguments from shastra, or from people, to believe in Krishna and Vaishnavism to some degree. But that kind of faith isn't solid and strong, it's not based on knowing the truth, it's based on the possibility of knowing the truth. Which leaves open the possibility of the truth being something else entirely. Vaidhi sadhana doesn't have the power to reveal Krishna to you, only Krishna reveals the truth to you because the nature of that revelation is direct perception.

Therefore, past acharyas have said vaidhi doesn't lead to raganuga. Following rules and regulations doesn't lead to faith strong enough so that the desire to please Krishna out of affection becomes the basis of your

bhakti practice. You need to have complete faith in Krishna before you can have real affection with the desire to please and cultivate an intimate relationship. If you have doubt that Krishna exists, or is as described in shastra, than your bhakti is still on the vaidhi stage.

Not strictly following rules and regulations isn't the basis of raganuga bhakti. Raganuga bhaktas don't have to follow rules and regulations to spiritually advance, according to Jiva Goswami — see The Bizarro World post for the quotes. He states that the teachings in shastra about the necessity of following rules and regulations are for aiding people who have essential misgivings or misconceptions about God. He states that people who have the desire to please Krishna, not for a reward, but out of affection, out of raga, that they have attained the purpose of the rules and regulations in shastra. There is no possibility for them to lose that because it isn't based on a mental conception, like the knowledge a vaidhi bhakta may gain from learning and study. For the true raganuga bhakta, spiritual advancement is based on knowledge plus the experience of Krishna's revelation of the truth of his existence and the revelatory nature of shastra. That cannot be lost like a vaidhi bhakta can lose faith in spiritual knowledge over time.

As for the idea that following rules and regulations can be a detriment to raganuga bhakti — that depends on the level of raganuga the bhakta is on. There are stages of raganuga bhakti — beginners are usually mixed with vaidhi, so they tend to follow rules and regulations to some degree of strictness. That's by Krishna's arrangement so that they quickly learn what they need to learn.

People who join an ashram, or a guru's org, or follow the practice for various reasons, come from having had different spiritual experiences and education, usually ignorant of Vaishnavism except for those from a Hindu background. Whatever background they're from, whatever level of knowledge they have about yoga or Hinduism or Vaishnavism, none of that determines whether or not they're raganuga or vaidhi bhaktas. That's solely determined by what type of faith they have acquired in God, in Krishna, and in Vaishnavism as revelation from Krishna.

You can see the effects of the two types of devotees joining a strict vaidhi organization like ISKCON. Over time the raganuga bhaktas tend to fall away from the organization and strict practices while still maintaining an avid interest in bhakti and Krishna. Vaidhi bhaktas tend to either stay strict in or out of ISKCON, or some end up losing interest in Vaishnavism even if they stay in ISKCON or remain part of the social scene. They may stay involved for material reasons and or social reasons while having little to no faith or interest in bhakti itself.

The many critics and criticism towards ISKCON members or policies for not being strict enough in following the rules and regulations put forth by Prabhupada comes from vaidhi bhaktas, and it's not unusual that the object of their criticism is often the raganuga mood of not caring so much for strict following of rules and regulations.

How often can we hear critics complaining about ISKCON leaders not strictly following all the rules and regulations Prabhupada demanded to be a member? On many websites we can constantly hear complaints about such and such guru or leader who isn't chanting all his prescribed japa; some other one was maybe seen watching TV and playing music; some other one was maybe seen hugging a woman or been alone with women; some other one had sexual relations; some other one doesn't go to the morning program very often; some other one wears ordinary clothes a lot of the time; and on and on with complaints about doing anything besides following Prabhupada's strict vaidhi demands.

Whether or not those leaders are raganuga bhaktas, or maybe have lost interest in Vaishnavism, or just bored with the ISKCON lifestyle, I can't say. Still, the different moods of the vaidhi and raganuga bhaktas has always been a source of discord in ISKCON because of ISKCON's strict vaidhi policy. It was set in stone by Prabhupada and is vigorously pushed on out of either fear of ostracization, fear of the loss of "spiritual potency," or fear of offending Prabhupada and Krishna. Often that discord between the two types of devotees is misinterpreted by both sides to be about a liberal vs. conservative agenda.

The vaidhi bhaktas tend to see themselves as being more devoted and “staunch” in their resolve to “serve the guru” and tend to have a “purity” test for everyone else based on submission to Prabhupada, at the least they judge people on lip service to Prabhupada — unless you’re a leader, then they judge your every moment. The raganuga devotees tend to see themselves as being more openhearted and compassionate in comparison to the vaidhi bhaktas. Because both are generally ignorant about the differences between raganuga bhaktas and vaidhi bhaktas due to Prabupada not really teaching about it, they tend to see their discord with some judgmentalism over perceived low levels of “purity” and “compassion”. The result is that the social scene can be judgmental and accusatory, especially behind peoples backs a lot of harsh criticism is bandied about. Most are often reticent to speak what they truly feel for fear of being judged and accused of being a faultfinder, a fallen deviant, low class, blasphemous, etc. Many go in the extreme opposite direction and become a vocal critic of the other side, leading to their ostracization by that side.

If they could learn that their differences are often rooted in their different moods, then an understanding could take root of what is acceptable, and the society would benefit as a whole with much more participation. Now as it stands, there is only a small percentage of participation outside of the full-time members and Indian congregation in most ISKCON communities.

That’s not the only reason for a lack of interest, but it’s a pretty big one, especially from those who are extremely critical of ISKCON guru policies and or supportive of ritvikism, which is a substantial percentage of ex-members. That’s coming mostly from the vaidhi bhakta’s criticism of ISKCON leaders for not living up to their perceived absolutist perfect standard of Prabhupada’s teachings and instructions. Because of that they tend to either stay away from or are ostracized by ISKCON. The irony is that it was Prabhupada’s lack of teaching about raganuga and vaidhi, and his insistence on the vaidhi bhakti mood as the only acceptable mood in ISKCON, which is creating so much tension and non-cooperation between his followers. It’s not the lck of submission to Prabhupada, it’s submitting to his mistaken ideas that causes the problems and disassociation.

Therefore so many seek Vaishnava association elsewhere. But I wonder if due to the peer pressure to conform to Prabhupada, will the other sanghas start going down the same path as ISKCON?

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Fall of the house of the usher

This is a response to a comment from Seeker to the Fiesta Forever post. In Seeker's comment a link is given to an article on the Hare Krishna community's main web outlet for revolt and angry diatribes against ISKCON's leaders—and anything they see as against Prabhupada or his ideals—the *Sampradaya Sun*. The article was written by it's owner and editor Rocana (Rochaan) Das.

The comment by Seeker goes into some valid complaints, and philosophical points being overlooked in the reaction to the current guru scandal going on in ISKCON with Prabhavishnu Swami. For those who don't know: he was a major ISKCON guru and GBC (governing board) member who just resigned, writing a letter saying he's going off to live with a lady in Thailand. This was after he had been seen a number of times with her, or other women in Thailand. For sannyasis, who are supposed to be celibate and single, that's a big no-no in the more fervently conservative or fundamentalist Hindu society, where things like that can end with riots and violence against the guru and his followers. That's generally due to their belief that the celibate monk has some special mystic power, and that their devotion to him is predicated on his remaining celibate so he can confer on them his mystic potency and favor from God. If he is found to be deceptive about his celibacy, they feel cheated about worshiping him and giving him money. In ISKCON it's more personal, the disciples are expected to give their lives over to the guru, the guru is seen as the one whom you worship and serve, not because he's able to confer mystic potency because he's celibate, but because he's "pure" in his devotion to Krishna. Your spiritual advancement is taught as being predicated on your

worship and servile devotion to him.

Since many feel it’s too difficult to give up their lives and submit to the guru as a servant and slave, as ISKCON would like, they end up seeing their worship and devotion as being satisfactory if they can give money, or property. Of course ISKCON gurus subtly and not so subtly promote this conception. Like I’ve said in the past, I believe they prefer less surrendered ashram devotees, for more outside householders making money to donate. This may be the cause of the change in ISKCON over the years in making it currently difficult to join the ashram if you are without funds or coming from a promising past, whereas it used to be very easy for almost anyone to walk in and be accepted.

Due to Prabhavishnu’s zone of activities being in places with many Hindus, and in Eastern Europe, where ISKCON is more popular than elsewhere, over the years he has amassed many disciples and (supposedly) a lot of wealth and influence. One number I heard was 1500 initiated disciples, but due to where he worked, that could be a very low estimate. On the one hand, for Hindu gurus (he’s Irish BTW) that’s not an especially large number of disciples, but on the other hand many of those were westerners, with more wealth and influence than an average Indian—and it’s common in ISKCON that a large percentage of the Indians taking initiation are quite well off, financially speaking. And as is common practice for disciples of ISKCON gurus, they tend to be devoted and give them lot’s of money, property, work for them for free, etc. So we’re hearing the usual bitter complaints about a guru in ISKCON being a fake and amassing wealth and worship for himself, which we hear whenever this type of thing has happened in the past.

Whenever some guru from ISKCON has a public scandal which involves sex or some other sensual gratification, you can rely on Rocana das to wheel out his “Sampradaya Acharya” ideology as the cure-all for the inevitable fall-out and handwringing by, and over, “hurt disciples,” of whichever guru was caught not living up to the demands to follow strictly their vaidhi-bhakti rules and regulations they impose on others. ISKCON leaders and followers parrot Prabhupada’s representation of an über-strict

vaidhi mentality and path as singularly defining bhakti-yoga and Vedic culture in their teachings.

To their vision the only truly authentic spiritual path or lifestyle is in strictly following, for life, the 4 regulative principles (no sex except for procreation, no intoxication, vegetarianism, no speculative gambling), as well as strictly following the rules and regulations of *vaidhi-bhakti sadhana* that Prabhupada demanded to be followed every day for the rest of your life: chanting at least 16 rounds of japa meditation (2-3 hours) every day; submissively serving as part of Prabhupada's proselytizing mission (and no other, unless it's in service to an ISKCON guru) as your reason for being; rising in the morning early enough to attend kirtan, japa, and satsang by no later than 4:30 a.m. etc.

Like I've pointed out in many posts here, they completely disregard the tenets of raganuga-bhakti, which doesn't require the strict adherence to the rules and regulations Prabhupada put forth, and is considered the higher path in traditional Gaudiya teachings (pre-Prabhupada). And as I've pointed out, this puts the Prabhupada community in the unusual position of demonizing any guru who eventually is exposed for not strictly following their vaidhi mentality and path, even though he may be a spiritually advanced raganuga bhakta. Even Prabhupada said on a few occasions that raganuga-bhaktas shouldn't be judged for not following rules and regulations because they're not bound to the same rules and regulations that vaidhi bhaktas are. The harsh critics of the ISKCON gurus who get exposed for not strictly following vaidhi-bhakti and all the rest of what Prabhupada demanded, either don't know or don't care about the nature of raganuga bhakti being without the need or dependence on all the rules, regulations, and renunciative lifestyle Prabhupada demanded—or if they do know, they're are out to settle scores and don't care if they ignore and pervert the authentic teachings in doing so.

That doesn't mean that anyone who doesn't follow what Prabhupada demanded is a raganuga-bhakta, but the critics don't even take that into consideration as a possibility. I've seen recent demands that all the gurus in ISKCON should have to appear to follow all the demands of Prabhupada,

or be demoted from their position. If they don't show up for the early morning sadhana all the time, and if they don't make it obvious to everyone that they're doing nothing but working for ISKCON and Prabhupada all the time, always appearing to follow all the rules and regulations Prabhupada and ISKCON demands of it's members, then they shouldn't be accepted as spiritual masters. I've previously talked about that conundrum of the demonization in the Prabhupada community of the lifestyle of the more advanced path or person: as being fallen from a state of grace; symptomatic of a neophyte; or of an insincere exploiter—as if there is no other possible explanation or alternative for a spiritually advanced person but to submit to all the rules and regulations Prabhupada demanded—see Backasswards.

To someone like Rocana who sees Prabhupada's instructions and attitudes towards any and all things as the descent of the divine revelation of God, any deviation from those instructions by a guru in ISKCON is seen as a really big deal. They get their panties in a twist because they've bought into the guru-as-savior paradigm that Prabhupada (and others) created in his teachings, and to them a guru is only qualified if he is "pure." Which to them means free from the desire to do anything but follow the above mentioned rules and regulations for life. Raganuga-bhakti is not allowed into the equation, being as that it's essentially verboten to them as *that-which-must-not-be-named*.

It's not the lack of "purity" in and of itself which is the problem for them, it's the betrayal, by their savior, by the person whom they've devoted themselves towards and worked for; whom they've worshiped and served as God's human representative in the promise of their ability to free them from their past sins and gain them entrance into God's good graces. They believe a guru is supposed to be self-realized and thisclose to God—which is supposed to manifest outwardly in being 100% pure in their lack of desire to do anything but live the already mentioned submissive strict vaidhi lifestyle.

Whenever an ISKCON guru shows himself to have some desire other than fanatical devotion to vaidhi-bhakti and Prabhupada's demands, which then

causes all the usual anguish and finger pointing among his disciples and the rest of ISKCON, that inspires all of the regular critics of ISKCON's guru policy to put on their demagogue hat and wag their fingers with their well practiced "I told you so" speeches they've been incessantly boring us all with for years and years. Rocana stands out from the ritviks (ritvikism=no other gurus after Prabhupada are needed or wanted) with his ritvik-lite "Sampradaya Acarya" thesis. I never heard of it until Rocana began teaching it some years ago, it wasn't taught in ISKCON when I was there, although some lesser form of it has always been taught in ISKCON without any official name for it. The Prabhupada-is-special-like-some-other-past-special-gurus mood has always been present in ISKCON, but until Rocana codified it into a [semi] coherent philosophy, I had never heard of "Sampradaya Acharya."

Like you mention, traditionally that title has referred to the gurus who started a sampradaya (denomination)—like Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya, etc. Rocana took that title and re-invented a new definition based on a list of gurus Prabhupada presented in his books. Those gurus were never mentioned by Prabhupada as anything special like "Sampradaya Acharyas," I always took them to be prominent members of the [siksa, shiksha=philosophical] sampradaya. Although a sampradaya is usually defined by a line of disciplic succession where an unbroken chain of gurus and disciples lead back to the founder through a diksha connection [initiation of disciples into the tradition by a guru in a ritual ceremony], the gurus in Prabhupada's list were not that, they included people who weren't connected through diksha.

That conception was/is derided by many in India as inventing a bogus sampradaya, with the Gaudiya Matha being created by Prabhupada's guru as a bogus sampradaya because the founder guru (Bhaktisiddhanta) himself wasn't properly initiated in a diksha ceremony by a guru. They claim he lied about being initiated, and to this day many people see him and his disciplic succession as unauthorized and impotent due to that lack of a bona fide diksha connection by Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati. To many in Indian traditions, unless you are initiated properly in a diksha ceremony by a proper guru in an unbroken disciplic succession, you haven't received

the mystic potency which enables your mantras and sadhana to work properly, and thereby grant you entrance into the higher levels of self-realization and God consciousness.

Bhaktisiddhanta's disciples taught that the diksha sampradaya was of lesser importance, and that the higher potency was in the tattva lineage, the siddhanta sampradaya, the unchanged teachings being handed down. They called this the siksa (shiksha) sampradaya, the unbroken, unchanged, philosophical succession. The list of gurus Prabhupada presented in his books is supposedly representing the Gaudiya Vaishnava siksa sampradaya. Rocana das then created a dogma which has those mentioned in that list as "Sampradaya Acharyas," distinct from the gurus not mentioned in that list by being especially empowered by God. In what way? According to Rocana, they set the tone and mood of the sampradaya for the times, they are the examples to be listened to and followed above all others, they should be accepted and promoted as the guru of all other gurus until another one appears. How do we know when a new Sampradaya Acarya appears? It will simply be apparent to one and all. This idea is based on something Prabhupada said about a guru being chosen due to being "self-effulgent," by his own godbrothers in the Gaudiya Math, after the departure of Bhaktisiddhanta due to his not choosing a successor guru.

To Rocana, Prabhupada is the Sampradaya Acharya of our times, he must be taught as the premier guru, which all other gurus must present and use as the source for their teachings. If you don't do that, then you're an egotist who's looking to exploit and con people into worshiping and supporting you. For all of his criticism of the ritviks for lacking scriptural pramana (backing) for their belief that no one should be allowed to be diksha gurus, because Prabhupada never appointed any, and therefore having the sampradaya continue on with ritvik priests performing ritual initiations as surrogates for Prabhupada—Rocana's Sampradaya Acharya dogma also lacks any scriptural pramana. He made it up, yet still acts arrogant and demagogic towards the ritvik supporters and ISKCON leaders for not accepting his supposedly higher bona fide directives.

In fact, the list of gurus, the supposed siksa Sampradaya Acharyas according to Rocana, whom Prabhupada presented in his books, includes Madhva Acharya, and some other gurus who were followers of his— he being the founder of the Tattvavadi or Brahma Madhva sampradaya. While the Gaudiya Sampradaya (Hare Krishnas) is officially connected to the Brahma Madhva sampradaya through the diksha succession of it's founder (Sri Chaitanya) to Madhva's succession (disputed by some of Madhva's followers), when it comes to the more important siksa sampradaya conception underpinning the Sampradaya Acharya dogma—i.e. the connection to an unbroken philosophical succession of teachings, Prabhupada and the entire succession of gurus following Sri Chaitanya are not connected to Madhvacharya or his followers. Of all the Vaishnava sampradayas, our Gaudiya sampradaya, while being officially connected to the Brahma Madhva sampradaya through a diksha connection, has the least in common with that sampradaya when it comes to the siksa, the teachings. We have much more in common with all the other major Vaishnava sampradayas, which we differ only a little from, whereas we differ in many fundamental ways from Madhva's teachings, and of course from that of his followers. Which is why many in the Madhva or Tattvavadi community vehemently disregard the claim of our Gaudiya tradition as being part of their own.

This is the list of gurus that appears at the bottom of the introduction of Prabhupada's Bhagavad Gita. The names in bold are Madhva and his followers. The next two names are not accepted by many of his followers as being part of their tradition, the *Puri* suffix in their names denotes initiation into a Shankarite order, but Gaudiyas claim they were also initiated into the Madhva sampradaya, that it shouldn't be held against someone if they first took initiation into some other tradition before joining their final one. But since the history is murky, no one can say with absolute proof one way or another.

> 1) Krsna, 2) Brahma, 3) Narada; 4) Vyasa, **5) Madhva, 6) Padmanabha, 7) Nrhari, 8) Madhava, 9) Aksobhya, 10) Jaya Tirtha, 11) Jnanasindhu, 12)**

Dayanidhi, 13) Vidyanidhi, 14) Rajendra, 15) Jayadharma, 16) Purusottama, 17) Brahmanya Tirtha, 18) Vyasa Tirtha, 19) Laksmipati, 20) Madhavendra Puri, 21) Isvara Puri, (Nityananda, Advaita), 22) Lord Caitanya, 23) Rupa, (Svarupa, Sanatana), 24) Raghunatha, Jiva, 25) Krsnadasa, 26) Narottama, 27) Visvanatha, 28) (Baladeva) Jagannatha, 29) Bhaktivinoda, 30) Gaurakisora, 31) Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, 32) His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

So, where did this list come from? It can be traced back to Kavi Karnapura's *Gaura Ganoddesa Dipika*, written in the latter part of the16th century. Also Baladeva Vidyabhusana, a famous Gaudiya acharya who lived in the 18th century wrote a version of it. He was a former disciple of the Madhva sampradaya who was tasked with giving credence to the bona fides of the Gaudiya sampradaya as being connected to one of the 4 scripturally authorized Vaishnava sampradayas, thereby giving them legitimacy in the eyes of people who took such things seriously. At the time the Gaudiya Vaishnavas were being criticized for not being connected to one of the 4 sampradayas, so he tried to change that. Kavi Karnapura's purpose was the same, it was solely about showing a connection to one of the 4 recognized Vaishnava sampradayas, as mentioned in the Puranas, specifically to the Brahma Sampradaya, also known as the Brahma Madhva Sampradaya. It had nothing to do with some Sampradaya Acharya mega-guru ideology. Besides the list he also famously wrote a Gaudiya commentary on the *Vedanta-sutra* for the same reason. That was seen by the other sampradayas as a necessary task for a bona fide tradition, which until Baladeva Vidyabhusana hadn't been done. It's called *Govinda Bhasya*. This is the list he presents in his *Prameya Ratnavali*:

tatra guru-parampara yatha

shri-krishna-brahma-devarshi-
badarayana-samjnakan
shri-madhva-shri-padmanabha-

shriman-nrihari-madhavan

akshobhya-jayatirtha-shri-
jnanasindhu-dayanidhin
shri-vidyanidhi-rajendra-
jayadharman kramad vayam

purushottama-brahmanya-
vyasatirthamsh ca samstumah
tato lakshmipatim shriman-
madhavendram ca bhaktitah

tac-chishyan shrishvaradvaita-
nityanandan jagad-gurun
devam ishvara-shishyam shri-
chaitanyam ca bhajamahe
shri-krishna-prema-danena
yena nistaritam jagat

tatra—in this connection; guru—of bona-fide spiritual masters; parampara—the disciplic succession; yatha—just as; shri-krishna—Lord Krishna; brahma—Brahma; devarshi—Narada; badarayana—Vyasa; samjnakan—named; shri-madhva—Madhvacarya; shri-padmanabha—Padmanabha; shrimat-nrihari—Nrihari; madhavan—Madhava; akshobhya—Akshobhya; jayatirtha—Jayatirtha; shri-jnanansindhu—Jnanasindhu; dayanidhin—Dayanidhi; shri-vidyanidhi—Vidyanidhi; rajendra—Rajendra; jayadharman—Jayadharma; kramat- one after another; vayam—we; purushottama—Purushottama; brahmanya—Brahmanya; vyasatirtha—Vyasatirtha; ca—and; samstumah—offer prayers; tatah—then; lakshmipatim—Lakshmipati; shrimat-madhavendram—Madhavendra Puri; ca—and;

bhaktitah—with devotion; tat—his; shishyan—disciples; shri-ishvara—Ishvara Puri; Advaita- Advaita Prabhu; nityanandan—Nityananda Prabhu; jagat—of the entire universe; gurun—spiritual masters; devam—the disciple; shri-chaitanyam—Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu; ca—and; bhajamahe—we worship; shri-krishna—of Shri Krishna; prema—of pure love; danena—by the gift; yena—by whom; nistaritam—delivered; jagat—the universe.

With great devotion we glorify the spiritual masters in the Gaudiya Vaishnava disciplic successions. A list of their names follows: 1) Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, 2) Brahma, 3) Narada, 4) Vyasa, 5) Madhvacarya, 6) Padmanabha, 7) Nrihari, 8) Madhava, 9) Akshobhya, 10) Jayatirtha, 11) Jnanasindhu, 12) Dayanidhi, 13) Vidyanidhi, 14) Rajendra, 15) Jayadharma, 16) Purushottama, 17) Brahmanya, 18) Vyasatirtha, 19) Lakshmipati, 20) Madhavendra Puri, and 21) Ishvara Puri, Advaita Prabhu and Nityananda Prabhu (who were all disciples of Madhavendra Puri). We worship Ishvara Puri's disciple, Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who delivered the entire universe by granting the gift of krishna-prema (pure love of Krishna).

How do we know his purpose was to give legitimacy to the Gaudiya sampradaya? The list ends with the founder, Sri Chaitanya. Baladeva lived a few hundred years later, if the list was supposed to be "Sampradaya Acharyas," why did he leave out the famous gurus that followed Sri Chaitanya until his own time? Certainly they were qualified, e.g. Rupa Goswami, Jiva Goswami, etc. Later, the rest of the names were added, it appears in a poem by Bhaktisiddhanta. The early ones directly following Chaitanya Mahaprabhu were the most famous gurus in the Gaudiya community, with the final few gurus directly connected to Bhaktisiddhanta

and then Prabhupada.

This next list is from Kavi Karnapura, here we can see his purpose very clearly. He begins the list by citing the 4 authorized sampradayas, he then attempts to show Madhva's direct diksha (ritual initiation) lineage to Mahaprabhu. Clearly the point is to show the Gaudiya Vaishnava as part of an official sampradaya.

> In the Kali-yuga there are four Vaishnava sampradayas, known as the Shri, Brahma, Rudra, and Sanaka sampradaya. This is described in the following statement of the Padma Purana:"In the Kali-yuga four Vaishnava sampradayas, the Shri, Brahma, Rudra, and Sanaka sampradayas, will purify the earth."
>
> I shall now begin this book by describing the disciplic succession descended from Shripada Madhvacarya. Lord Brahma, the creator of the universe became the disciple of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Narayana. Brahma's disciple was Narada. Narada's disciple was Vyasa. Vyasa then transmitted transcendental knowledge to his disciple Sukadeva. Sukadeva taught the same knowledge to his many disciples and grand-disciples in this world. The famous Madhvacarya received initiation from Vyasa personally. Madhvacaya carefully studied all the Vedas from Vyasa, and later wrote his book Mayavada-sata-dusani, where he proved that the Absolute Truth is the Supreme Person, full of all transcendental qualities, and not the qualityless impersonal Brahman. Madhvacarya's disciple was the exalted Padmanabhacarya. Padmanabhacarya's disciple was Narahari. Narahari's disciple was Madhava Dvija. Madhava Dvija's disciple was Aksobhya. Aksobhya's disciple was Jayatirtha. Jayatirtha's disciple was Jnanasindhu. Jnanasindhu's disciple was Mahanidhi.

> Mahanidhi's disciple was Vidyanidhi. Vidyanidhi's disciple was Rajendra. Rajendra's disciple was Jayadharma Muni. Among Jayadharma Muni's disciples was Shriman Vishnupuri, the famous author of the Bhakti-ratnavali. Another disciple of Jayadharma was Brahmana Purusottama. Purusottama's disciple was Vyasatirtha, who wrote the famous book Shri Vishnu-samhita. Vyasatirtha's disciple was Shriman Laksmipati, who was like a great reservoir of the nectar of devotional service. Laksmipati's disciple was Madhavendra Puri, a great preacher of devotional service. Madhavendra Puri was the incarnation of a kalpa-vrksa tree in the abode of Vraja. This tree bears as its fruits the mellows of servitude to Lord Krishna, friendship with Lord Krishna, parental love for Lord Krishna, and conjugal love for Lord Krishna.
>
> Madhavendra Puri's disciple was Shriman Isvara Puri Svami. Isvara Puri carefully understood the mellows of conjugal love for Lord Krishna, and was able to distribute that fruit to others.
>
> Shri Advaita Acarya displayed the sentiments of servitorship and friendship for the Lord, and Shriman Ranga Puri manifested the sentiment of parental love for Lord Krishna.
>
> Lord Chaitanya accepted Shriman Isvara Puri as His spiritual master. The Lord proceeded to flood the entire world with spontaneous transcendental love for Krishna.

According to Rocana's Sampradaya Acharya thesis, the names on the list Prabhupada presented are in fact a revelation of the Sampradaya Acharyas of the past, they are supposedly leaders of the higher *siksa sampradaya*, which gives us our true connection to God. Yet quite a few on

that list would vehemently disagree with even being included in a sampradaya which disregards so much of what they taught and believed. Rocana disregards much of what they taught and believed, and so do all the followers of Prabhupada and the Gaudiya tradition he claims to represent. Sri Chaitanya himself disregarded much of what they taught, he actually spelled out his differences with them and severely chastised the followers of Madhva. He certainly wouldn't agree with all the names on that list being "Sampradaya Acharyas." Also, Gaurakisora das babaji was a recluse, he certainly wasn't the type of person Rocana describes as the guru of gurus for his times.

So, although Rocana tries to present his thesis as some well thought out and shastrically well supported alternative to ISKCON's guru dynamics, and the rival ritvik dogma, in fact it's a poorly thought out concoction which in practice would be no different than the ritviks he argues with, or with ISKCON official law. In all three dogmas Prabhupada is the only guru that matters, the others giving initiation are basically surrogates—either officially so with the ritviks and ISKCON, or unofficially so with Rocana's Sampradaya Acharya dogma. ISKCON officially made it part of their by-laws that the sole role of the guru in ISKCON is to serve as a connector to Prabhupada, as his surrogate, they're only allowed to teach what he taught, and disallowed to disagree with him on any topic or bring up any other teachings from another guru. Hilariously this leads to some funny stuff in ISKCON law about the origin of the jiva, due to Prabhupada's tendency to contradict himself on that topic.

Rocana may disagree with that assessment, claiming he allows gurus unlike the ritviks, and that ISKCON gurus end up being the object of worship and devotion to their disciples regardless of ISKCON law, and he may be right—but still, when it comes down to what really matters in the life of the disciples, Prabhupada and his teachings are promoted as sacrosanct and infallible, which disagreeing with can get you ostracized or excommunicated as being the thoughts of a fool or a demon. In fact you don't even have to disagree, all you have to do is not humbly submit to ISKCON, or the ritviks, or Rocana, and you're considered on the wrong path and unworthy of respect—actually, actively disrespected. We see this

all of the time. The ritviks are endlessly attacking ISKCON leaders on their websites or in person heckling them, Rocana and his followers are endlessly attacking ISKCON leaders and the ritviks on his website, ISKCON attacks the ritviks and people who speak like Rocana. And all of them attack those outside of ISKCON who have the temerity to think they have the right to act as gurus without being under the supreme controlling jurisdiction of Prabhupada or ISKCON, i.e. all the rest of the Gaudiya Vaishnava community.

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Magic Bus

I happened to chance on a website today which culled a bunch of quotes from Prabhupada speaking about his godbrothers (fellow disciples of his guru). The site, Oneiskcon.com is known as an outlet for a distinctly "conservative" (for ISKCON) outlook. "*Conservative*" being a euphemism they've given themselves, along with *traditional*, for espousing views which are supposedly more strictly in-line (and therefore more authentic) with Prabhupada—and Hindu culture in general, but only as long as it isn't specifically against Prabhupada's ideas for ISKCON. Or, what they would like you to believe is Prabhupada's wishes, even in the face of evidence to the contrary.

A current example of the latter is the debate going on for a while now over letting women become gurus in ISKCON. The arguments against women gurus are from the "conservatives" in the ISKCON community, whose self-defined traditionalist viewpoint isn't in line with Prabhupada's own words on the matter (a number of times he said he wanted all of his disciples, including women, to become gurus). But since Prabhupada also defined women's roles as being strictly submissive to men, and without purpose in life other than familial obligations, the conservatives have taken to the tactic of ignoring or twisting what Prabhupada said. So it appears their real agenda is not so much sticking with Prabhupada, but with implementing a vision they have of Vedic or Varnashrama dharma. How do we know? Because when confronted with Prabhupada's quotes supporting their opposition in the ISKCON community, they make the argument that Prabhupada was making a temporary adjustment to a more perfect ideal, that there is a higher ideal that Prabhupada sacrificed for pragmatic

reasons, i.e. sexism isn't acceptable in modern cultures.

That seems like begging the question to me, i.e. they assume that Prabhupada wanted ISKCON to be like traditional Vedic society, they assume that anything different was just Prabhupada being pragmatic, they assume that he wanted ISKCON to undergo a gradual transformation into a more strictly "Vedic" society because of his interest in varnashrama. Although Prabhupada did express a desire to add varnashrama in some way to ISKCON, he never delineated what that meant in practical terms. That gives an opening to people to bring in their own pet ideas to fill in the blanks on specifics, telling everyone what Prabhupada meant when he said varnashrama should be introduced in ISKCON. He meant more Hindu, more Vedic, more in line with the dharmashastra. That assumption is than used as a basis for their debate with those opposed to their ideas. For an example of their mindset, under the heading of One ISKCON's website is the phrase: *To Preserve and Restore Traditional Vedic Values*.

That's the basis for the continual internal fight (going on for the last I dunno, 20 years?) in the ISKCON community over the direction of the society. It mainly manifests in fighting over the roles women are allowed in ISKCON. But it also manifests in fighting over the treatment of homosexuality, with the conservatives in this case sticking closer to Prabhupada's views, and essentially ignoring the more traditional place homosexuality had in Vedic society (in the Kama-sutra homosexuality is treated as acceptable).

For some time now the conservatives have put forth an ideology on women's roles that was entirely absent when Prabhupada ruled over ISKCON. I'm talking about *Stri-dharma*, women's dharma. I never heard the phrase the entire time I was in ISKCON (5 years). I wondered how often Prabhupada said stri-dharma, so I looked around for 10 minutes, I couldn't find a single reference outside of a passing reference in the Sanskrit in one verse in the Bhagavatam, and one reference by Hrdayananada Goswami in the 11th canto. I searched Vanipedia which also has letters and conversations from Prabhupada and couldn't find a single instance. That may not be everything Prabhupada ever said, but it shows very clearly

how important Prabhupada saw the concept for his teachings, i.e for ISKCON.

Even though Prabhupada never pushed it, the “stri-dharma is the only dharma for women in ISKCON” meme has taken hold through repetition and ignorance. If asked I would wager that most current devotees involved with the ISKCON community think that Prabhupada vigorously promoted “stri-dharma” as a template for his female disciples, and for women in general. That’s come about due to the “conservatives” incessant pushing of the phrase “stri-dharma” as if it’s always been a part of ISKCON, but that it’s been neglected by the “liberal” deviants in charge of ISKCON. The truth is the opposite. It’s a fairly recent introduction into ISKCON internal communication, and its sole purpose is to fool people into thinking Prabhupada supported the wholesale subjugation of women. Which in general he did, but, he made exceptions. Those exceptions were his followers who were involved in preaching work. Did we see Prabhupada tell all the women who were neglecting their families to surrender and serve him and ISKCON full-time, to stop? No. Did we see Prabhupada ask his female followers to become gurus? Yes.

The *Decepticons* [those who believe they know Prabhupada's real internal intention, over his pragmatic inspired changes to Vedic culture allowed in ISKCON to deceive the fragile modern mentality] don’t seem to care too much about what Prabhupada said or did, since anything can be disregarded by use of their basal paradigm: if it isn’t traditionally vedic or varnashama (according to them) then it’s a temporal anomaly due to Prabhupada’s pragmatism. What he really wanted is for ISKCON to morph away from all “pragmatic” changes to accommodate modern people, towards a purely vedic varnashrama culture.

Of course the obvious flaw in their groupthink is this simple fact: that what inspired Prabhupada’s supposed pragmatism, not only hasn’t changed, but it’s gotten worse.

Why was Prabhupada pragmatic in allowing women roles in ISKCON, which are really only meant for men? The modern ethos of political correctness,

which only allows egalitarianism as the basis for a discussion on the norms of a civil society, is supposedly the cause of Prabhupada's pragmatic changes from a more ideal goal, i.e. if ISKCON openly promotes the "Vedic" ideal of forcing women to only consider a very limited number of options in their lives, or stri-dharma, that could have a very negative effect on the expansion of ISKCON in modern cultures which see that ideology as demonic.

We can see a very similar debate at the present time in the debate and recriminations going on in the GOP political party in America. After the loss to Obama there's a lot of hand-wringing going on in the press over "needed" changes in the party platform because of changing demographics, i.e. the naturally Democrat leaning segment of the population is growing at a faster rate than the Republican segment, thereby making future victories less and less likely for Republicans. That is unless they change their platform.

What the ISKCON conservatives encounter with their opposition is a mixed bag of dissent from their goal of morphing ISKCON into more in line with "varnashrama." Some believe Prabhupada's words trump varnashrama ideals, some believe pragmatic concerns should still be considered important, but I haven't seen any of them challenge the notion of stri-dharma supposedly being a part of Prabhupada's plan just because he mentioned wanting varnashrama introduced into ISKCON. Maybe there has been that argument made, I just haven't seen it yet.

The Decepticons and the more liberal establishment of ISKCON both generally agree with the principle that Prabhupada's wishes should be honored, but with a variety of different motivations. A common motivation is the widely held belief among Prabhupada's followers that their own spiritual potency and empowerment from Krishna is directly related to how much they "surrender to the instruction of my spiritual master." Now someone may say that bhakti by definition is *ahaituky apratihatā*, without any cause but itself, devotion for the sake of pleasing the object of devotion. But that isn't really considered much when it comes to guru-tattva in ISKCON circles.

Prabhupada instilled in his followers through an amazingly constant and consistent refrain: you will be empowered by Krishna (God will work through you) to the degree you make the instruction of your spiritual master your life and soul, because *the secret of success in spiritual life is pleasing the spiritual master*. Practically every single time Prabhupada talked about his success with ISKCON he would give credit not to his guru, like many people think he did, instead what he actually did was give credit to himself. He would say over and over that his success was only due to his following the order of his spiritual master, that the potency Krishna gave him was only due to strictly following the orders of his spiritual master. This was his way of teaching his followers that their own empowerment by Krishna is solely dependent on following his orders.

That ideology was and is one of the most repeated teachings in all of ISKCONISTAN (ISKCON and the Prabhupada worship community). It's repeated ad nauseam, and taken as a given as an undeniable and unquestionable fact by pretty much all of Prabhupada's followers. You can't understand the ISKCON mindset towards gurus, self-empowerment, spiritual success, etc. without that ideology being front and center. It's the basic structure which shapes their vision on how they see themselves in relation to their success or failures in their current lives.

Ask any follower of Prabhupada what the secret of success is to gaining enlightenment, to spiritual life? The vast majority will say it comes from devotion to a guru. But the funny thing about their view, is that's it's not actually taught in any Vedic shastra (scripture). Surprised? I can hear them know pulling out all their quotes telling me the importance of "surrendering to a spiritual master," how it's only through the mercy of a guru that you can succeed or be empowered by Krishna. And in one sense they're right, but only within a narrow contextual frame of reference. Prabhupada purposely misled his followers on guru-tattva (teachings about gurus), specifically on the importance of gurus to your own salvation, and the importance of guru for your own empowerment to teach others.

If you look at the teachings in the shastra closely, and within context, you

get a completely different idea than that taught in ISKCON. In ISKCON you're taught a mystical based philosophy centered around "surrender" to a guru, where surrender means to literally give yourself over as a slave. If you give up your ego and surrender to a guru, to the degree you surrender you will be rewarded with enlightenment, and empowerment to enlighten others. This was taught ad infinitum by Prabhupada and ISKCON as the "secret" of success in "spiritual life." Why such seeming hyperbole? Is it really what the shastras teach? No.

Words such as surrender or serve are used in the shastra when speaking about the importance of gurus to your own enlightenment. Also the idea of being empowered by God through surrendering to a guru is taught. But the context, and therefore the meaning, was radically different from how Prabhupada used them in his interpretations and teachings.

As I've written extensively about previously, the idea of "surrender" in shastra is always in the context of surrendering your time and energy to follow the guru's instructions **on how to spiritually advance**.. The basic idea taught in shastra is simple and obvious (for any skill set):

1)You need to learn X amount of information and experience to become enlightened.

2) You also need a Y type of source, where Y equals an authentic source of spiritual information.

3) X + Y = various levels of enlightenment and empowerment or XY^2

What Prabhupada did was to radically alter those equations. His goes like this:

1) You need to learn X amount of information and experience to become enlightened (the same as above)

2) You also need a Y type of source, where Y equals an authentic source of spiritual information (the same as above)

3) X and Y will only work in conjunction with Z—special mystic mercy and

empowerment from a guru that you can only receive through surrender and service to that guru, even if he's long gone. And you can't advance on the path without it.

4) Z = various levels of enlightenment and empowerment

Prabhupada added another component to the equation, and by doing so he completely changed the teachings on guru-tattva, and on Vaishnava Vedanta in general since his guru-tattva is so all-encompassing. In shastra, surrender and service to a guru is strongly advocated and made clear as a necessity. But what did surrender and service mean? And what does gaining the mercy and empowerment of a guru mean? Is it all a mystic transference, as implied by Prabhupada and ISKCON? Where you're rewarded for the right attitude and services rendered? Almost all of Prabhupada's followers have been taught to believe in just that, even if not consciously, unconsciously they see their lives through that prism because Prabhupada spoke about guru-tattva more than practically anything else.

Nowhere in the shastra are you taught the importance of surrender and service to a guru within the contextual framework taught and implied by Prabhupada. You're not told that by becoming the willing slave of a guru that you'll gain perfection or empowerment from his mystic benediction. Such ideas are absent from Gaudiya Vedanta in general. You do see such ideas (shaktipat) from other types of Hindus like many Shaivites. But not from Gaudiya Vaishnava sources.

The mercy and empowerment you receive from surrendering to a guru was meant in the same way that surrendering to a professional teacher of any type can lead to the empowerment from that teacher, e.g. if you want to learn engineering you need to surrender to a teacher, surrender simply means to accept and follow the teachers instructions on what you need to do to learn to be an engineer. That's all a guru is taught as being. That's all surrender meant. Service or seva was simply as payment to the guru, just like you need to pay tuition to get schooled for engineering. Service was important to the guru. But not because of the need of pleasing the

guru to gain a mystic reward, it was necessary because gurus were rare, and often they were married with families, and even if not they often had lot’s of disciples, and even if not, there needs to be an impetus for the guru to take his time and interest to teach you. That was where service came in. It was your payment. If you couldn’t pay than you could serve the guru some other way. By that payment or service the guru was obligated to teach you, and without it the guru wasn’t obligated.

But in ISKCON, all that is nonsense. They really believe that their success is predicated on pleasing the guru, but not because the guru will then take the time to teach them—but because Prabhupada has them convinced that Krishna will reward them with some magic beans to heaven.

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25

Dum da dum dum dum

This is a reply to a comment from Nirmala Devi Dasi who wrote:

> It shocks me that some of you are criticizing Srila Prabhupada. Not only has he saved the life's of countless people, but has taken them by the hand and is guiding them back home, stopping the repeated cycle of birth and death. Have you no appreciation? There may be a few things said that may not be totally politically correct, but look at the good he has done, no-one can be a 100% perfect in this material world no matter who they are.

That seems rather naïve to me.

Consider this fact: ISKCON and the wider Prabhupada worshiping community promotes Prabhupada as one of the highest level perfect humans in history—above Jesus, Mohammad, Buddha, Moses, all the Vedic pantheon of demigods, almost all the past great yogis, and of course everyone else in history.

What can that indoctrination lead to when we find Prabhupada making proclamations that are virulently racist, misogynistic, antisemitic, fascist, or in support of child exploitation? Here are two things it can lead to:

1) People believe those statements as the inerrant word of God because Prabhupada is God's most perfect spokesman.

2) People believe Prabhupada was most definitely not godly, and therefore whatever he taught is bogus, his organization is bogus, his followers are bogus, even his religion is bogus if it can promote such a person as godly but who promoted such obviously ungodly ideas.

> I feel I owe my life to Srila Prabhupada, if it wasn't for his mercy I would be dead or in a mental hospital.

According to the philosophy Prabhupada promoted, your destiny is based on your own past karma. Therefore according to what he taught, Prabhupada had nothing to do with it—unless you believe Prabhupada somehow did what he did on his own, without God's arrangement and plan. According to his translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna says that "everyone follows my path in all respects." Also:

> na kartrtvam na karmani
> lokasya srjati prabhuh
> na karma-phala-samyogam
> svabhavas tu pravartate
>
> The embodied spirit, master of the city of his body, does not create activities, nor does he induce people to act, nor does he create the fruits of action. All this is enacted by the modes of material nature.

In the purport Prabhupada writes:

> As long as he is in the city of body, he appears to be the master of it, but actually he is neither its proprietor nor controller of its actions and reactions.

All through the *Gita* Prabhupada teaches that the human soul or atma is under the control of God, that the atma is "not the doer" of any action, that God is driving the movements of the atma to fulfill it's destiny or karma. The idea you promote which has Prabhupada somehow transcending the laws of nature which Krishna is speaking, and therefore able to change the course of someone's God controlled destiny, is sadly all

to indicative of the level of spiritual knowledge among Prabhupada's followers.

> If all you can find are a few quotes to discredit the miracles that Srila Prabhupada performed, well that's laughable really. Even my Dad said that what Srila Prabhupada achieved was more than Jesus, and he was a Christian.

I've never heard of any miracles performed by Prabhupada, I was in ISKCON for 5 years and I never heard of any miracles mentioned. It is true that what Prabhupada accomplished was more than Jesus. But that isn't saying much, since Jesus accomplished almost nothing and was killed for his efforts. Christianity was not the creation of Jesus, it was the creation of Paul, who never met Jesus, but was inspired to create a religion centered around him. Countless religious people have accomplished more than Jesus—just now in the news is the grand funeral of Rev. Sun Myung Moon, he accomplished quite a bit more than Jesus as well, or how about Satya Sai Baba? They accomplished a great deal, as did Joseph Smith (founder of Mormonism) and many others. Should we judge a person's credibility based on their accomplishments, or, what they teach?

> Also I bet most of you most definitely would not have even en-counted Krsna consciousness if it wasn't for Srila Prabhupada.

I guess it depends on how you see reality. The person you are defending taught that God sends you a spiritual master, not that a spiritual master is in control of your destiny. The idea he taught is that God is directing your destiny. The idea of a human having the independent ability to change your destiny is antithetical to the religion that Prabhupada promoted.

> I Googled the difference in the weight of male and female brains and guess what? Male brains are heavier, looks like Srila Prabhupada was right AGAIN.

No one argued that he was wrong when it comes to men having larger

brains than women. But not all men have larger brains because brain size is relative to body size, i.e. a large woman will have a larger brain than a small man. Also, Prabhupada greatly exaggerated the difference in brain size making it seem like there is a really big difference, when in reality the difference is quite small. Besides that mistake, his point in bringing this up was in promoting the idea that men are inherently more intellectually capable or intelligent than women. Why did he do that? It was part of his overall promotion of women as created by God to specifically see themselves as inferior and submissive to men, i.e. men have larger brains therefore women should submit themselves to men for guidance. Well, Flipper has a larger brain than women and men, maybe we should all submit to Flipper.

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26

What a long strange trip it's been

This is a reply to a comment from Seeker. He wrote:

> http://harmonist.us/2012/06/anadi-for-beginners-we-all-have-to-start-somewhere-or-do-we/
>
> I think the crux of his problem is that he views karma as a system of reward and punishment. The right and advanced understanding is to view karma as a system of learning and experience and not as a complex mathematical machinery to compute your rewards/punishments based on your pious deeds/sins. With this incorrect understanding of karma, the swami tries to save God from being blamed for the suffering in this world.
>
> Ramanujacarya, Sankaracarya, and Gaudiya Vedanta acarya Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana all explain in their respective commentaries that this sutra is saying one cannot argue that God is partial and thereby responsible for suffering. The reason this is so, they continue, is that the Upanisads clearly teach that God only rewards and punishes the living beings with due consideration of their good and evil deeds.

This makes it seems that he’s quoting them on the Upanishad they mention, but it’s really an extrapolation. The verse from the Upanishad they quote says that good or bad deeds of the jiva are caused by God,

based on their karma. It doesn't say anything about karma being about reward and punishment:

> ajño jantur anīśo 'yam
> ātmanaḥ sukha-duḥkhayoḥ
> īśvara-prerito gacchet
> svarga ṁ vāśv abhram eva ca
>
> He makes whomsoever he wishes to lead up from these worlds do good deeds and makes him whom he wishes to lead down from these worlds do bad deeds

Or how Prabhupada translated it:

> The living entity is completely dependent in his distress and happiness. By the will of the Supreme he can go to heaven or hell, as a cloud is driven by the air.

That contradicts the idea of karma being about reward and punishment. That simplistic idea may be told about karma to unsophisticated people or children, but for the absolute truth we are informed that we have no free will, and therefore karma cannot be based on our actions (since we have no free will). That's why we see verses like the above telling us that good and bad deeds of the jiva are caused by God, making the jiva do what is needed to fulfill it's destiny. You also quoted this from Tripurari Swami:

> While some have argued for a less-than-literal interpretation of the word anadi with regard to karma, any such rendering of the term leaves God open to the charge of being responsible for the suffering in the world.

He gives no reason why we should accept that statement as factual. His rationale that we can only view the word anadi as literally as possible on the karma of the jiva, in order that God isn't blamed for the jiva's suffering, is undermined by the illogical basis of that teaching, i.e. you have to believe that the existence of a highly complex structured universe

and all life forms, have no origin, have existed without ever first beginning to exist.

Karma cannot be anadi in the sense of the jiva having been undergoing samsara without a beginning—simply because samsara is a physical action, and all physical actions have a beginning. Since samsara entails birth and rebirth in physical bodies, in a physical world, a jiva cannot have been undergoing samsara without a beginning, it would be like saying:

> I've been driving cars forever, there was never a time when cars didn't exist, or a time when my body didn't exist, or roads. I have always been driving a car on roads that have always been here.

Cars and bodies, roads and planets. None of these things can exist without a beginning to their existence. Because it takes a created world, and created bodily forms, for the jiva to undergo samsara, therefore the karma of the jiva isn't beginningless in the sense of the jiva having always existed in samsara. The world and all the creations in it (life forms) had to have been created at some point. Created things cannot be beginningless. Human forms, planets, stars—these need to exist before samsara can take place. For Tripurari's interpretation to be correct, we have to believe that all life forms, planets, and stars, have always existed, were never created in the first place, had no beginning. That is simply logically impossible.

I've had this conversation with Tripurari Swami and some of his followers previously, he nor they, could see that their belief and insistence on teaching the idea of a beginningless world, of our reality having no beginning ever, they couldn't see how that illogical theology undermines their credibility as purveyors of spiritual truth.

No sane person will believe that human forms, animal forms, vegetation, planets, etc, have always existed without a beginning. Those are all products of the design and manufacture of a creator. Before God designed and then built those things—they couldn't have existed. That is the big logical problem for Tripurari Swami (and others) insisting that the karma of

the jiva being anadi can mean only one thing—that the jiva has always been undergoing samsara. There has to have been a starting point for everyone in samsara simply because you cannot have samsara existing in a world and in bodily forms without a beginning to the world and bodily forms. The idea of a beginningless world is impossible and therefore an imaginary reality.

What anadi means in this context is that the karma of the jiva doesn't have a beginning because the jiva has always been covered by avidya, there wasn't a time when the jiva all of a sudden became covered, it was always covered, anadi, without a beginning—**not that the jiva has always been undergoing samsara**. The jiva has always been ignorant, without an origin in time, due to being eternal but unconscious until brought to full consciousness. The idea of karma being without beginning is in that context, the context of avidya being the basis for karma, and avidya being the nature of the jiva, without beginning, until enlightenment.

The Vedic understanding is although God has always existed, there was a beginning to God's creations. From the Chandogya Upanishad 6.2:

> 1. "In the beginning, my dear, this universe was Being (Sat) alone, one only without a second. Some say that in the beginning this was non—being (asat) alone, one only without a second; and from that non—being, being was born."
>
> 2. Aruni said: "But how, indeed, could it be thus, my dear? How could Being be born from non—being? No, my dear, it was Being alone that existed in the beginning, one only without a second.
>
> 3. "It (Being, or Brahman) thought: 'May I be many; may I grow forth.'…

From the Aitareya Upanishad 1.1:

In the beginning all this verily was Atman only, one and without a second. There was nothing else that winked. He bethought Himself: Let Me now create the worlds.

Also the famous *Nasadiya Sukta* from the *Rig Veda*:

1. nAsad AsIn no sad AsIt tadAnIM nAsId rajo no vyomA paro yat kim AvarIvaH kuha kasya sharmann ambhaH kim AsId gahanaM gabhIram

Neither was there non-existence, nor was there existence then Neither was there land, nor the heaven/sky beyond that. (In that case), what was the facade (or envelope)? Where? Encased in what? How could there be/ was there, water, impenetrable and deep?

2. na mRityur AsId amRitaM na tarhi na rAtryA ahna AsIt praketaH AnId avAtaM svadhayA tad ekaM tasmAd dhAnyan na paraH kiM chanAsa

Neither was there death, nor immortality then. Neither was there any sight of night and day. Motionless (it was) most definitely/ assuredly. That One (became) a pulsating consciousness, by its own Self Nature. There was none other.

3. tama AsIt tamasA gULiham agre apraketaM salilaM sarvam A idam tuchChyenAbhv apihitaM yad AsIt tapasas tan mahinAjAyataikam

At first darkness lay hidden in darkness (or nothing-ness existed in nothing-ness, but concealed). (And/ thus) water was visible everywhere. (From) the gigantic all pervading void/ emptiness (that) existed, With a mighty reverberation, the One was born, out of Contemplation.

4. kAmas tad agre sam avartatAdhi manaso retaH prathamaM yad AsIt sato bandhum asati nir avindan hRidi pratIShyA kavayo manIShA

Desire was first (created), by It's same-motion (vibration). This was the Primal seed (of desire) in the mind. The relation/ connection/ join between existence and non-existence, they (the Seers) found out, by reflecting (on the matter) in their heart, and have accepted (this).

5. tirashchIno vitato rashmir eShAm adhaH svid AsId upari svid AsIt retodhA Asan mahimAna Asan svadhA avastAt prayatiH parastAt

The cord (or connection between existence and non existence), cut across and spread in all directions (in the middle or perhaps above). It was insemination (of existence) by the Great Self, above and below.

6. ko addhA veda ka iha pra vochat kuta AjAtA kuta iyaM visRiShTiH arvAg devA asya visarjanenAthA ko veda yata ababhUva

How can this be know with certainty? (Who can tell this to us with certainty?) Who here can tell us? From where was it born? From where was it released/projected? The Gods came subsequent (to this creation). How then can the (birth of) this world/ universe (existence) be known? (Who then knows (about the) birth of this world/ universe? (existence)

7. iyaM visRiShTir yata ababhUva yadi vA dadhe yadi vA na yo asyAdhyakShaH parame vyoman so a~Nga veda yadi vA na veda

This creation of (this universal) existence (earth/

> universe), perhaps He (the Great Self) placed (it there) or perhaps not. The one who is the (Absolute) Lord of the Supreme Cosmos, He would definitely know…. or maybe even He does not.

Also this from the *Satapatha Brahmana*:

> Prajapatir va idam agre asit Eka eva so kdmayata syam prajdyeya iti So sramyat sa tapo tapyata tasmach chrantdt tepandt trayo lokd asrijyanta prithivy anta rixam dyauh sa imams trln lokdn abhitatapa tebhyas tapte bhyas trini jyotlmshy ajayanta agnir yo yam pavate suryah sa imani trlni jyotlmshy abhitatapa tebhyas taptebhyas trayo vedd ajdyanta agner rigvedo vayor yajurvedah surydt sama vedah sa imams trln veddn abhitatapa tebhyas taptebhyas trini sukrany ajdyanta bhur ity rigveddd bhuva iti yajurveddt svar iti samavedat Tad rigvedenaiva hotram akurvata yajur vedena ddhvaryavaih samavedena udgltham yad eva trayyai vidyayai sukram tena brahmatvam uchchakrama
>
> Prajapati was formerly this universe [i.e. the sole existence]. Being alone he desired may I be, may I become. He toiled, he performed austerity. From him, when he had so toiled, and performed austerity, three worlds were created—earth, atmosphere, and sky. He brooded over [i.e. infused warmth into] these three worlds. From them thus brooded over three lights were produced,—fire, this which purifies [i.e. pavana, or the air] and the sun. He brooded over these three lights. From them so brooded over, the three Vedas were produced,—the Rig veda from fire, the Yajur veda from air, and the Sama veda from the sun. He brooded over these three Vedas. From them so brooded over, three seeds [or essences] were produced—bhur from the Rig

> veda, bhuvah from the Yajur veda, and svar from the Sama veda. Hence with the Rig veda, they performed the function of the hotri; with the Yajur veda, the office of the adhvaryu; with the Sama veda, the duty of the udgatri; while the function of the brahman arose through the essence of the triple science [i.e. the three Vedas combined].

From the *Jaiminiya Brahmana* 2.244:

> prajapatir va idam agre asit | nanyam dvitiyam pasyamanas tasya vag eva svam asid vag dvitiya sa aiksata hantemam vacam visrje | iyam vavedam visrsta sarvam vibhavanty esyatiti
>
> Now, this (world) existed as Prajapati at the beginning. Seeing that there was no second, other (than him) – but his speech did exist as something belonging to him; his speech was a second – he reflected, “Look, I am going to release this speech. Now, this (speech), once released, will continue to develop into all this (world).

All of these verses and more tell the same story. But some people will interpret these ideas to mean these are descriptions after a pralaya (destruction of universe) awaiting for the creation of a new one (srishti). But that isn’t what the context is of any of those verses, and they make it clear that nothing existed but God before the creation. In Vedic cosmology the dissolution of a universe doesn’t destroy everything in existence except for God, yet in the verses above we are being told than nothing at all existed anywhere, but God. Also, the pralayas are spoken of in shastra as happening to a single brahmanda at a time, not all brahmandas are dissolved simultaneously. [a brahamanda is a solar system, but a universe according to Prabhupada---in shastra a Brahmanda is described as having only one sun, with the earth at the center].

In the above descriptions we see a different idea on the origin of the

universe than that of srishti (regular scheduled creation) after pralaya (regular scheduled destruction). They teach the idea of God existing alone, before anything else at all in existence, i.e. before Vaikuntha existed, before the Mahatattva (material world), before awakened jivas, before language, before anything else. Logically those things can only have come into existence after the point in time when God designed and then created them. But because of people like Tripurari Swami, Prabhupada, and similar types, they have confused the issue by misunderstanding and then misleading people to think that shastra teaches a totally irrational and illogical theory on the origin of life, the universe, and everything. They insist that none of it has a beginning, all of it, everything, has always existed, exactly as it is. A child wouldn’t believe such nonsense, but believe it or not, not only do they seem blind to their philosophical folly, they seem to get angry or upset if you point it out to them. They will claim and treat you as if you don’t have faith, or aren’t able to see some divinely esoteric idea which can make the impossible, possible.

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Twisting siddhanta to justify Prabhupada

Rocana das (roe-chawn), the **Founder–Sampradaya Acharya** of the *Sampradaya Sun* website, (the Internet's largest gathering of nitwit opinions on Gaudiya Vaishnavism) has written a rebuttal of Hamsavatar's rebuttal, and of Goura Premananda who echoed those views—of dear Abby Mudra's sex article, as mentioned here in the previous post and comments at Don't Stop Till You Get Enough. Rocana's rebut of a rebut is called Twisting Siddhanta to Justify Sense Gratification.

Typically, Rocana excoriates what he sees as a deviation from Prabhupada's teachings, i.e. in this case that any sex but for procreation is sinful, and that to make any concession for married people is some great sin. What I found interesting is his almost word for word copy of what I wrote in a comment I wrote to the previous post 1 week ago, where I reiterate the bogus cause of the jiva's samsaric existence as propounded by some of Prabhupada's more speculative followers, but not actually taught in any shastric text. Of course, as usual, Rocana presents no scriptural justifications for his theological teachings, simply presenting them as de-facto theological truth because of something Prabhupada said here or there:

> None of the authors writing on this subject give us a clear explanation of the fact that the reason we came to the material world as a spirit soul is because we were envious of God — and the essence of all envy is to envy

> Krsna's pastimes with Radharani. In other words we don't want to serve the Divine Couple, we want to be Krsna, we want to enjoy Radharani, or vice versa. We want to be Radharani and enjoy Krsna personally, directly. So this kind of attitude qualifies us to come to the material world and get these material bodies, where we can make believe, pretending that we're God and we're seeking out the Divine Female, or vice versa, depending on the body you happen to be in. We want to engage in these amorous pastimes.
>
> Sastra gives us the essential knowledge of why it is that we're in this material world and why sex desire is so intense. Of course, there is much more information there on how the material energy works and how Krsna designed it to give us this intense illusion… that along with the intense illusion of enjoying sex, we get the most intense reaction from the material world. It's the essence of all entanglements in this material world. The entanglement is that one wants to be the supreme enjoyer, to imitate Krsna and engage in amorous pastimes with a female consort, then he wants to become the creator, and create offspring. From there comes the family and he has to support the family; he has to feed the offspring and take responsibility for them. This is material entanglement. Even if it's done under the most strict religious injunctions, it is still an entanglement.

The reason Rocana rarely if ever gives any scriptural source for his incessant claims of scriptural authority for his parroting of Prabhupada is simple—there usually is none. Like so many of Prabhupada's followers, they either repeat or paraphrase some thing or other Prabhupada said, and then claim that they are giving us the scriptural take on this or that. Just like Patita Pavana on another recent article at the Sampradaya Sun, he goes into a long convoluted diatribe on the origin of the jiva in samsara,

where all he does is present Prabhupada's words as if that is THE authoritative shastric pramana (scriptural evidence). There is no shastric pramana for the jiva's origin in Vaikuntha, as all shastra and common sense claims the jiva never falls back into illusion after attaining moksha. Of course Prabhupada sometimes agreed with that, and other times contradicted himself and said anyone could fall down at any time from the liberated status in Vaikuntha. Shastra only supports the concept of never falling down from enlightenment, yet Patita Pavana, like so many others, support the opposite idea because of Prabhupada's contradictory stance on the topic which has become standardized ISKCON DOGMA, even with no shastric support.

Like Rocana, the real ultimate authority on theology for "pundits" like those two, is themselves. Since Prabhupada contradicted himself on so many major topics, those types of "pundits" don't rely on scripture as the theological authority to settle the controversy, instead they rely on a selective reading of Prabhupada's various musings and statements, regardless of shastric support or not for those ideas. That is how the ISKCON community functions, and as I've said before, because of that, they are not really part of the Gaudiya Vaishnava sampradaya, which is based on scriptural authority. They've created a new sampradaya which is based on Prabhupada as the ultimate authority, which is why you see people like Rocana push the idea of Prabhupada as the Jesus of Vaishnavism, i.e. no one comes to Krishna but through Prabhupada for our current day and age (his *Sampradaya Acharya* thesis).

Due to various reasons of mistrust, so many of the ex-members of ISKCON readily follow that Christianized ideology because they see it as an antidote to what they perceive as the exploitation of ISKCON by the current batch of ISKCON GBC approved gurus, and the bogus system which creates them. They are ready to accept Prabhupada as a Jesus like figure for Gaudiya Vaishnavism because they hate the alternative of accepting the gurus in ISKCON being treated as if they're as spiritually elevated as Prabhupada. They promote the concocted ideology of Prabhupada as THE divine savior of mankind sent from heaven to save the world, and they promote that as some type of self-evident truth. Even in

ISKCON if you challenge that paradigm you'd probably be kicked out rather quickly and harshly. Any questioning of Prabhupada as the ultimate ONE AND *ONLY* heaven-sent world savior, is seen as an evil offense! You are evil if you doubt that Prabhupada was like God, perfect and beyond questioning! And you're practically insane or stupid if you think anyone else can attain the lofty position Prabhupada was/is on. How is that different than how Jesus is seen in Christianity, God's right hand man who is essentially non-different from God?

Have you accepted Srila Prabhupada as your personal savior?

Just like many Protestant Christians who believe that once they accept Jesus as their personal savior and become "born-again," that regardless of what else they do they are "saved" because of that, ISKCON circles also present that same exact ideology with Prabhupada as the savior figure. Just like the Protestants differ from the more traditional Roman Catholic idea about salvation beginning with the sacraments (e.g. baptism) and being dependent on how you live your life until you are judged at death, ISKCON teachings differ from normal Gaudiya Vaishnava teachings in the same way. For many ISKCON types it's all about faith in and serving Prabhupada, by that alone either Prabhupada will personally take you to heaven, or Krishna will be so pleased with you for serving Prabhupada that you will be granted entrance into heaven—regardless of anything else in your spiritual development. Whereas the normal traditional approach was/is that you are dependent on your own development of self-realization, based on ritual behaviors (sadhana) and spiritual evolution.

The question remains—where did the theology expounded by Rocana das originate—where sexual desire or the desire to enjoy "sense gratification" by the jiva, is taught as the cause of being kicked out of Vaikuntha? Where the desire to "be like Krishna," to desire to be the enjoyer of life—as being the original cause of samsara—where does that theology come from? You never see shastric pramana presented by people when they make those types of claims, even though it's standard ISKCON siddhanta (theology)—that's because it came from something Prabhupada said or wrote.

Prabhupada often taught that the cause of the jiva's samsaric existence (why we aren't in heaven) is because we wanted to enjoy in a variety of ways. Sometimes he would say we wanted to be the Krishna or enjoyer or God of our own world, other times he would be more explicit and say we wanted to enjoy the gopis, like Krishna. For example, in a purport to *Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta* :

> One should understand that due to his desire to enjoy himself in competition with Kṛṣṇa, the living entity comes into material existence.

Or from a conversation with his disciples:

> **Acyutananda**: But in the Gita, it says, "Once coming there, he never returns."
> **Prabhupada**: But if he likes, he can return. That independence has to be accepted, little independence. We can misuse that. Krsna-bahirmukha hana bhoga vancha kare. That misuse is the cause of our falldown.
> **Acyutananda**: In Krsna book it says that there were some color fighting in Dvaraka. They were throwing color. And some men became lusty seeing the women. Will that be the first part of their falldown, to be in Vaikuntha and think of personal lust with Krsna's associates?
> **Prabhupada**: Yes.
> (Conversation, Mayapur, February 19, 1976)

Often Prabhupada would purposely mistranslate a verse to push the idea:

> kṛṣṇa-bahirmukha hañā bhoga-vāñchā kare
> nikaṭa-stha māyā tāre jāpaṭiyā dhare
>
> The natural position of the living entity is to serve the Lord in a transcendental loving attitude. When the living entity wants to become Kṛṣṇa Himself or imitate Kṛṣṇa, he falls down into the material world.

That’s from a purport in the Bhagavatam, the quote is from *Prema Vivarta*, supposedly by Jagadananda Pandita, but that authorship is disputed by many who claim it was written by Bhaktivindoda Thakura. Either way, it’s often quoted and mistranslated by Prabhupada. Here is a more correct translation from *Jaiva Dharma* where it’s referenced:

> cit-kana – jiva, krsna – cinmaya bhaskara
> nitya krsne dekhi – krsne karena adara
> krsna-bahirmukha hana bhoga-vancha kare
> nikata-stha maya tare japatiya dhare
>
> The jiva is an infinitesimal particle of spiritual consciousness, like an atomic particle of light emanating from the sun. Sri is the complete spiritual consciousness, the transcendental sun. As long as jivas focus their attention on Krsna, they maintain reverence for Him)However, when they turn their attention away from Krsna, they desire material enjoyment. Krsna’s deluding potency, maya, who is standing near them, then binds them in her embrace.

The first part of that translation is a bit poetic, but the second part, the one that Prabhupada quotes a lot, that’s more literal and fine. Every time Prabhupada quotes that verse he mistranslated it and has it saying that “the jiva wanted to be Krishna himself” or “was envious of Krishna and wanted to be God,” and was therefore sent to the material world to try his hand at being God, being the enjoyer. The implication being that having a desire to enjoy is a sign of envy of Krishna and wanting to yourself take his position as God, i.e. be worshiped and adored, enjoy sexual escapades with beautiful gopis, etc.

The verse is actually trying to get the point across about what happens to someone if they turn away from Krishna, i.e. they succumb to the desire to enjoy the world as their purpose in life, and therefore end up suffering because of it. In fact the context of that verse, under the subheading of “**The living entities in their conditioned state**,” is about what the

non-liberated jiva needs to understand—it's presented as the cause of a continuance of material existence, it's a warning, it's not presented as the *original cause of material existence*, which is how Prabhupada mistranslated it—and therefore invented a new theological rationale for the jiva in samsara—which led to a new theological paradigm on how to become free from samsara.

These kinds of ideas are the basis of how ISKCON teaches about the cause, and therefore a solution to the cause, of samsara (repeated material existence of suffering, death, rebirth). This question is naturally developed: what is the natural solution to the cause? Answer: the opposite of the desire to enjoy like Krishna. What is that? The desire to serve Krishna's enjoyment, with no desire to enjoy of our own. That's what's taught in ISKCON circles as the self-evident basis for bhakti-yoga, and, taught as the mentality that everyone needs to aspire for to attain heaven (Vaikuntha or Goloka).

The problem is, it's a complete concoction by Prabhupada. There is never any shastric pramana offered for that theology, all they ever do is quote Prabhupada, as if his word alone is shastric pramana. Prabhupada never presented shastric pramana for that ideology. For example the quote above from the purport to a verse from Caitanya Caritāmṛta—that's commenting on a verse which actually, unbelievably, says that the origin of the jiva's material existence has no original cause because the jiva has always been ignorant. That's the nature of the jiva until attaining enlightenment, which I explain according to what shastra actually teaches on the topic at Inconceivably We're One, But We're Not The same.

Why did Prabhupada teach what he taught on the origin of the jiva? There have been various theories, a popular one is that he didn't think the western mind could relate to Vedic thought on the origin of jiva from Brahman. I don't believe that since his stated mission from the beginning was to get a following in the west so he could go back to India and make a big impact there with his western followers. Of course another popular theory among the ISKCON crowd is that Prabhupada was simply presenting the truth, although they often acknowledge that he

contradicted himself by also teaching that the jivas never fall from Vaikuntha back into samsara, both in his books and elsewhere. In fact, in his books you rarely see him directly mention the idea of the jiva falling from Vaikuntha, most of those statements were either in recorded lectures and conversations, or letters.

As I've stated before, I believe the reason he promoted the idea that the jiva was kicked out of heaven by the desire to enjoy like Krishna, and, that the jiva could fall again from Vaikuntha "at any time" if it again desires to enjoy like Krishna—was because he wanted to instill in his followers an attitude of fear towards doing anything but serving in ISKCON. If even the liberated people in heaven could be kicked out for being desirous of enjoyment, especially sexual enjoyment, how does that psychologically affect the people who are trying to get into heaven?

They develop an innate sense of fear and repulsion towards the idea that it's alright to have an attitude of enjoying life, or sex, or anything really. They develop an attitude, a neurosis actually, which we see in Rocana's writing, and is commonplace in Prabhupada's followers, of fear and loathing of "being an enjoyer." To them, anything but an attitude of being a servant, as in a maid or a butler, with zero desire to enjoy anything outside of that service to your master (your guru and Radha Krishna) is seen as the cause of their continuance of samsara (suffering and death). That was what Prabhupada wanted them to believe.

In ISKCON, and in his teachings in general, what's demanded of everyone by Prabhupada to become "Krishna conscious," and therefore be enabled to exit from the material world of suffering and death? No personal sense enjoyment is allowed, it's a sign of envy of Krishna, it's the actual cause of your incarceration in the world of samsara, all that's allowed is 24/7 service to his plans for the expansion of ISKCON and his teachings. No movies, no TV, no literature, no sports, no music, no holidays, no tourism, no hobbies, and especially no romantic life or sex for pleasure—nothing at all except service to ISKCON is allowed.

Marriage is allowed, but it's taught as a second class situation for men,

where a concession is made for spiritually weak men to enjoy sex, but only if it’s for procreation, never simply to enjoy with your spouse. If you’re really sincere about God, the ideology he espoused teaches that you’ll remain single and celibate for your entire life. And of course dedicated 24/7 (all of your time) to serving the bona fide guru and ISKCON. ISKCON of course amends that teaching to include the gurus in ISKCON, whereas their many critics outside of ISKCON but who still accept Prabhupada as their only guru, will only concede to serving Prabhupada.

That ideology and mentality is so ingrained in ISKCON and the wider community that even if the followers do have an enjoying spirit to some degree, they usually consider themselves fallen and disappointing to Krishna and Prabhupada. It’s quite astonishing then to realize that there is absolutely no shastric basis for their belief system. That it was created by Prabhupada, possibly because he feared the American followers he first encountered (hippies) were too attached to enjoying life with abandon, and that they needed to fear their hippie lifestyles to surrender full time and serve Prabhupada’s plans for ISKCON.

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Strange days indeed

This is a reply to a comment from Seeker to the Devil Inside post.

First he mentions a lecture from Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Maharaj on the origin of the soul. Seeker wrote, first quoting Sridhar Maharaj:

> Consciousness means endowed with free will, for without free will no consciousness can be conceived.”
>
> I think this fallacious assumption is the point where ‘all hell breaks loose’. As you have pointed out in one of your previous comments in the post – “I also disagree with Sridhar Maharaja’s idea that consciousness gives or implies free will, that isn’t stated anywhere in shastra and in fact contradicts it. Consciousness alone doesn’t imply free will, only being in control of the mind would imply free will since the mind guides us. The truth is we lack the power to create our own thoughts.”
>
> Only thing that surprises me now is that how is it that many people (myself included few years back) don’t see through this sophistry that consciousness should necessarily imply free will. I guess this lie repeated many times over and over by all gurus who want to emulate the success and popularity of Prabhupada makes it an indubitable truth.

It seems we have free will if we don't think too deeply on how the mind works, e.g. how thoughts are created, how memory is manifest, etc. Therefore it's a no-brainer for most people if they're told we have free will. They can't conceive how it would be otherwise.

Even though it directly contradicts so many teachings from shastra, because it seems we have control over our thoughts and our bodies, it's easy to discount what shastra says as being something more mysterious and intangible than what it says in a forthright manner. People are just not used to the idea that they have no control over their thought process, plus you have the many interpretations of shastra which stress we should try to control the mind. As I've explained previously here and also at this post, shastra in general teaches different things for people on different levels of realization.

An example I give is in the Bhagavad Gita where early on Krishna says to try and control the mind, then later he says he's actually in control from within. The first instruction is meant to aid people who need to detach from a sense of identifying with the mind. Krishna's has us understand that you're different from the mind by telling you to observe and try to restrain the mind in meditation. As I said in a previous post:

> As you advance, your ability to understand more and complex truth increases, so shastra provides a more advanced teaching for you. It's the nature of Vedic spiritual teachings in general to sometimes speak lesser truths or relative truths to progressively lead someone to the higher or absolute truth. The 6th chapter of the Gita is a perfect example. Krishna is talking about learning how to detach the self from the mind in meditation, but because until you are advanced in spiritual understanding you will identify with the mind as yourself or under your control, Krishna tailors those instructions on learning how to detach the self from identifying with the mind, by using a concept you believe to be true — that you can control your mind.

> BG 6.26: From wherever the mind wanders due to its flickering and unsteady nature, one must certainly withdraw it and bring it back under the control of the self.
>
> Because people are so conditioned from birth to identify with the mind, they need to gradually learn how to detach themselves from that in order to be self-realized and God conscious. One way to do that is by telling them to try to control the mind, to steady it, to try to focus it on silence. What this type of teaching is doing is helping people to detach from identifying with the mind, to see it as different from themselves, as something to observe, which is the real purpose of these teachings.

Seeker's second point was about something else Sridhar Maharaj said, first he quotes him and then comments:

> Why has the soul come to the world of "exploitation" and not the world of dedication? That should be attributed to his innate nature, which is endowed with free will. It is a free choice. This is substantiated in the Bhagavad-gita (5. 14):
>
> na kartrtvam na karmani
> lokasya srjati prabhuh
> na karma-phala-samyogam
> svabhavas tu pravartate
>
> "The soul is responsible for his entrance into the land of exploitation.
>
> I am confused by this translation or rather interpretation and which book is this coming from. Prabhupada's gita offers an entirely different translation:

> “The embodied spirit, master of the city of his body, does not create activities, nor does he induce people to act, nor does he create the fruits of action. All this is enacted by the modes of material nature

The verse doesn’t mention gunas (modes of nature), it says the *svabhava* of the jiva is the cause of it’s conditioned existence. Nowhere in the chapter does Krishna mention the gunas. Svabhava isn’t a synonym for guna, it’s really the opposite meaning because svabhava means your *inherent nature*. So you can’t blame the gunas as Prabhupada does, and you can’t blame the jiva as Sridhar Maharaj does. If it’s the inherent nature of the jiva, how can it be it’s choice? Sridhar Maharaja teaches that at the birth of the jiva from Brahman it “chooses either the land of exploitation or the land of dedication.” It then goes to live either the life of a nitya-siddha in Vaikuntha, or it goes to the material world of samsara. As I’ve pointed out previously, that conception is without merit. How can the jiva, right after being born from Brahman, have knowledge of anything? How can it know what dedication or exploitation is? It’s like expecting a newborn baby to understand philosophy, it’s just a ridiculous fabrication.

Plus, why would the jiva choose the world of suffering? Why would God give the jiva so little information and experience, and then expect it to make a decision that will profoundly affect it very negatively for a long time with so little experience or knowledge of the consequences? It makes God out to be capricious and cruel. What Sridhar Maharaj is doing is trying to give a logical reason for the jiva’s material existence based on the idea of it having free will. If it has free will than it has to choose to escape suffering in this world. How? By surrendering to a guru. In what way? By giving everything 100% to the guru. That is what Sridhar Maharaj’s teachings always come around to, i.e. you are here by your choice; only by your choice to serve a guru as a menial slave can you leave the world of suffering and go to heaven. To make that a rational doctrine, he has to present an original cause of your material existence which is consistent with your being here caused by your choice. It has to have been only your decision so that the way out is also only your decision. Your decision to exploit God for your pleasure caused you to be thrown into the world of

suffering, and conversely your decision to dedicate yourself to a guru will be the cause of your escape.

The next verse Krishna explains what he means by saying the svabhava of the jiva is the cause of material conditioning—ignorance, i.e. the svabhava of the jiva at birth is *ajnanenavrtam*, covered by ignorance. The verse after that, explains that the cure is knowledge. Not dedication to a guru. It's quite simple, but can be made complicated. When the jiva is born it's ignorant, it's life is lived in ignorance of absolute truth while being guided by God to attain moksha, liberation. It's ignorant nature (svabhava) is causing it to experience what it experiences in the various modes of nature. Neither Krishna nor the jiva is responsible—instead, the svabhava (ignorance) of the jiva is the cause.

Just like in modern medicine a cure for a virus is in giving a tiny bit of that virus to you, by that you build up immunity through producing antibodies, and then your body can fight off the disease. When you get the vaccine, which is a weak version of the virus, it can cause you to develop minor symptoms of the disease. The doctor isn't at fault, and you didn't get sick by your actions, it's your nature to get sick until your body develops immunity.

The third point Seeker brings up is on the topic of free will and how it has come to be that so many Gaudiya Vaishnavas from the 20th century onwards have promoted the idea that we have free will. He mentions the essay by Bhaktisiddhanta wherein he makes it clear that the idea of free will is an illusion, Seeker then writes:

> I mean, the lack of free-will should be like a topic of discussion for Bhagavad Gita 101. How come such an elementary understanding was failed to be communicated clearly between someone like Bhaktisiddhanta and his most scholarly disciple Sridhar Maharaj or someone with the title of Bhaktivedanta like Prabhupada? For instance, all that it takes in this original post "Devil Inside" is a simple question "Do we

> have free will?” and a simple answer “No” with a detailed justification provided by you. I find it difficult to digest that the fault starts only from Prabupada’s ISKCON. As in this blog, there are many topics related to Vaisnavism which could have been presented in an unambiguous fashion. If it has failed despite the best efforts of the teacher, then the fault can be thrown on the student who misinterpreted it for his own agenda – for instance, Prabhupada’s stress on 4 reg. principles can be proved to have originated from him. However, misunderstanding about certain important topics like lack of free will, proper understanding of raganuga bhakti, metaphorical understanding of lila, etc.., seem to have their origin even prior to the time of ISKCON or even within Gaudiya math during the times of Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur.
>
> In a nutshell – is it fair to conclude that only after the time of Bhaktisiddhanta that deviations started to crop up? Or would it be fair to say that Bhaktisiddhanta or even Bhaktivinoda Thakur and those before him have done their best to present the teachings clearly but it got twisted out of shape only by generations thereafter?

There have always been deviations of one type or another. Recently there have been many, probably because gurus like Prabhupada may have thought that the neophyte westerners not only wouldn’t be able to relate to the original teachings, e.g. no free will; but also probably because he had an agenda to get as much work out of them as he possibly could in the limited time he had, e.g. his take on raganuga bhakti; his insistence on a monastic lifestyle even for married people—and for life; his guru-tattva, etc. We know from what he said that he feared his devotees taking an interest in the more intimate raganuga sadhana. He plainly said he feared the preaching would stop.

Possibly, seeing his success, his godbrothers emulated him, wanting to influence his followers. Most of them made a point of not trying to disagree with whatever he said, and claiming him as siksa guru to them. Anyone could see that whenever they did they were met with vicious condemnation from Prabhupada's followers, e.g. Narayana Maharaj being harshly attacked for disagreeing with Prabhupada on the origin of the jiva in lila, and a few other things.

I think the teaching of free will came about due to the prevalent philosophy being promoted by the British and American Christians in India that Hinduism was a deeply flawed religion due to the concept of karma. Karma implies a predetermined destiny, i.e. you're living out the life planned out for you based on your good or bad karma generated in your past lives. Therefore the implication is that there is nothing you can do to change your fate. If it's your fate to be a lowly menial worker, than you accept it and don't even think about the possibility of rising to a higher station in life. The British had big plans for India—the "Jewel in the Crown" of the British Empire. There was a long time plan, or rather a conspiracy bent on converting India to Christianity. Max Muller had specifically been hired to translate the Vedic scriptures with the intent of making them look barbaric or ungodly as part of that plan. The plan was revealed in correspondence from him. He was hired and paid a very large amount for every page for just that purpose. He was broke at the time and so excited he wrote letters of thanks and also to his relatives telling of the British conspiracy to convert Hindus by fraud.

So there was a lot of negative propaganda going on in India, especially in the elite schools which were all British Christian colleges and prep schools. Why were they so intent on conversion? They believed they could avoid revolt if the people were on their side by being adherents to the same faith. That was how the Islamic empires survived for so long. The most popular way to demonize Hinduism was to harp on it's philosophy being the cause of discrimination in the caste system. By accepting your fate, instead of trying to change it, you were accepting of being exploited in the name of God, by greedy brahmins.

Before the British started with their anti-caste propaganda, aimed at the lower castes, there really wasn't much caste dissension to speak of. It was there, but not to the degree it would become under the British. They purposefully created conflict by demonizing the brahmins as greedy, wealthy, abusive exploiters. They invented a fake history (aryan invasion theory) which had the brahmins not only being greedy domineering exploiters, but also foreign invaders who brought their foreign Vedic religion into India after conquering and enslaving the native population, who were forcibly turned into dalits and sudras.

The lynchpin was the philosophy of karma and free will. If they could convince the people that the concept of predestination and karma was created by foreign invader brahmins to keep the people docile and under their control, accepting of being beneath them, the British believed that would be the key to their loss of faith in Hinduism and subsequent conversion to Christianity. Jesus, they preached, taught that the meek shall inherit the earth, the most fallen were his people, God's people. Rich people had a worse chance of getting into heaven then a camel going through the eye of a needle. This of course was very attractive to the poorer classes of people. India had developed a large poor class because of British exploitation, and previous to that hundreds of years of Islamic exploitation. The British were trying to use a divide and conquer strategy by trying to make the brahmins the root cause of all of India's problems. The goal was to get people to equate exploitative oppressive brahmins with Hinduism. It got so bad for the brahmins in public opinion that even till today brahmins are hated and mistreated in many parts of India, especially in the south, where the idea of a foreign aryan invasion conquering the native "Dravidian" people gained a great deal of popularity.

So I think the preachers in the Gaudiya Math who were trying to preach to those British indoctrinated Indians, and to the western Christians, thought they could get around the whole "predestination ideology is the cause of exploitation, self-harm, and all of India's ills," by teaching that the soul has free will. They began to teach that a person is not bound to a predestined future, that people choose their path in life because we have free will.

Sure, the laws of karma are there, but somehow we still have free will even though we're bound by karma. Let's ignore the logical inconsistency and shastric apasiddhanta (against scriptural teachings) and just preach we have free will for expediency's sake.

As you may know, Bhaktivinoda Thakura didn't embrace Vaishnavism until later in life. He had been indoctrinated by the British into seeing Vedic thought as unsophisticated and primitive, as well as exploitative and irrational—exactly what the British wanted the people to think. He admired Christianity over the antiquated tribal Vedic traditions. It was the trend among the young upper classes to think like he did. They thought they were enlightened to cast off Vedanta, even though, like Bhaktivinoda, the propaganda had been so effective that many of them had never learned Vedanta in the first place. Bhaktivinoda, like so many of his class, was ignorant of Vedic thought until later in life.

Previous to that time you didn't hear promotion of free will in Gaudiya Vaishnavism. It appears to have been a conscious preaching strategy at first. Possibly later it become standard dogma that really wasn't considered very deeply. Or maybe they do know they're being disingenuous but think they need to present free will to avoid criticism of the dreaded politically incorrect "fatalism" that keeps downtrodden people downtrodden, and without hope in their life for betterment. It was a big deal in India with the dalits and lower castes revolting against the traditional roles of Hinduism, led by Christian missionaries and the British government, with help from neo-advaitins like Ramakrishna, and the Brahmo Samaj. It was all part of a plan to maintain control of the most profitable part of the British Empire by gaining the support of the mass of lower class people for religious reasons, and of empowering higher class people who worked for the same goals of tearing down traditional Hindu society as barbaric and oppressive. Which in some ways it had become, but the British were intent on conversion, and cared not at all about reforming Hinduism. Not all British in India were part of the plan, it was planned at the highest level of British power and the East India Company, in collusion with the state church, the Church of England.

It didn’t work because the British had other bigger problems to contend with, and were eventually forced to quit India because of them, i.e. expensive wars, bad economy, very negative public opinion in the west after WWII over owning a conquered people’s land and society.

Is it necessary to continue on with free will ideology? It’s true that Christians and others still make the same argument about the negative impact on people’s lives due to belief in karma and predestination. But we live in a different environment than the India of 100 years ago. Christian preaching is of no consequence compared to the influence it used to have in India and the western world. The west is secular for the most part, and India is a combination of Hinduism and secularism for the most part. There is still a lot of criticism of Hinduism still going on, especially in places connected with the Congress Party, Dalits, and the left-over British based higher education system, but it’s not nearly so hostile and pervasive as it used to be.

The big picture is that everything is going on by the will of God. Why things are being taught the way they are is because that’s what Krishna wants. People may hate the idea of fate, destiny, no free will, so Krishna is making accommodation for various reasons. For the people who can handle the real truth of reality, that’s also made available by Krishna to accommodate them. No one is to blame, everything is going on according to plan, always. All the above players and actions are just outward manifestations, subsets, of Krishna’s overarching plot and plan.

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Fugitive from a chain gang

This first is a reply to a comment from Cacofonix, after that is a reply to a comment from Michael Schenk, both are comments to Fall of the House of the Usher post.

He wrote:

> just want to confirm if I fully understand what you are saying. Hence I am taking liberty of phrasing it in my own words.
>
> Fact 1: Most sampradhaya have a diksha driven chain of links. However they portray only the prominent acharyas. It is not necessarily a complete historical record. The way we understand the “missing links” is by falling back to see if Siksha holds tight.
>
> Fact 2: Baladeva Vidhyabhushana did two things to establish Gaudiya as a Sampradhaya. Wrote Vedanta Sutra commentary called Govinda Bhasya. Traced the links of the “new sampradhya” to brahma-Madhva sampradhaya.
>
> Going by these facts, what we are saying is that Lord Chaitanya’s (for those who don’t believe that he is a reincarnation of Krishna and for sake of preaching) teachings are not some new age philosophy. It is grounded in shastra and have this sampradaya link.

> Once that is established, then the emphasis is on Sikhsha and not diksha part.
>
> Please let me know if I got it right.
>
> a) Diksha is not an important part of Gaudiya Sampradhaya. Siksha is what is emphasized
>
> b) The link to Madha sampradhaya is done to establish it as a bonafide.
>
> Note: Not that we are lying or anything about it. It is just that once the link is establish in a “unifying” sense, then we diverge to bring out the “different” take or interpretation of Sastra as per the Lord’s teachings.
>
> Note: None of this is important for self realization. This is more a ordering of reality and hence a scholarly question and borne out of curiosity.

Like I said in my previous post, Baladeva Vidyabhusana specifically wrote a commentary on the Vedanta-sutra to establish the Gaudiya sampradaya as a serious school of Vedanta. There is a famous story on how that happened, you can read that story here. I believe he wrote that parampara list for the same purpose, although it originated a bit earlier from Kavi Karnapura, and can be seen in his *Gaura Ganoddesa Dipika*, where he makes it clear it’s for the same purpose as Baladeva. It was a concern during the time of Kavi Karnapura at the formation of the Gaudiya theological canon to establish the bona fides of the Gaudiya community; and later a concern of Baladeva to keep royal and other patronage for Gaudiya acharyas and temples in the face of jealous criticism over their lack of bona fides, from members of competing sampradayas for that same patronage. The accuracy of that list has been disputed by people in other Gaudiya parivars and in other sampradayas, and it has been defended and expanded on in detail by various Gaudiya Math gurus. Although they stress the importance of pancaratrika diksha (ritual initiation) as well.

I don’t know about the importance of an unbroken parampara (succession of gurus) in other sampradayas, nor do I know if they have a concept similar to the siksa sampradaya. I’ve never investigated their beliefs in any depth in that regard. In the Gaudiya sampradaya there are many different parivars (guru sanghas or organizations) and vamshas (family lineages) e.g. the many offshoots of the Gaudiya Math: like ISKCON, Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, Vrinda, Sri Chaitanya Math, etc. Then there are the various babajis in Vrindavana and or Nabadvip, each with their own sanga; there are Goswami descendants; and descendants of other founders of Gaudiya Vaishnavaism (Nityananda parivar, Gadadhara parivar, Advaita parivar, Narottama parivar) plus others. Many or probably most of those who are seriously devoted to sadhana-bhakti take an unbroken parampara very seriously. It’s more the norm for most of those outside of the Gaudiya Math offshoots to believe that without proper diksha into a guru pranali (line of gurus) that your sadhana will only take you so far (i.e. not far enough), that in order for it to have full potency you absolutely need proper diksha into a proper parampara.

ISKCON and the other Gaudiya Math offshoots vary on their regard or preaching about the importance of diksha, running the gamut from teaching it’s absolutely essential, to teaching it’s not all that important. As you can imagine, the initiating gurus insist on it’s absolute necessity. As a consequence, their followers who see them as enlightened masters, also parrot those beliefs. The current siksa sampradaya conception was innovated by Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, possibly with instigation from his father (different histories are given by different sources). As far as I know I don’t think he called it that, maybe the name came later from his disciples. The conception had always been present since the beginning of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, e.g. Sri Chaitanya didn’t give diksha as far as anyone can prove, the entire sampradaya is based on his teachings. But over time diksha became all-important, some of Bhaktisiddhanta’s followers say that he wanted to challenge that ideology, that he wanted to bring back that original spirit of self-realization being dependent on self-realization, and not on rituals or mystical charms of any type.

Prabhupada never taught about it. He went in the opposite direction,

pushing the importance of the diksa guru. But some of his godbrothers, and in turn their followers who teach a lot in India, and spend time in the wider Gaudiya community there, and who have been led to believe the extreme importance of diksha, they're the ones who teach about the siksa sampradaya. But, they also press the importance of diksha. This may have to do with trying to convince that they're part of a legitimate parampara in the face of criticism over the legitimacy of Bhaktisiddhanta's diksha. They may not really understand what Bhaktisiddhanta was trying to teach. It seems many of them consider the siksa sampradaya (or Bhagavata parampara) as an ideology about the relative non-importance of a diksha guru pranali (unbroken chain of gurus), whereas I believe it was more simply about the nonessential nature of diksha, due to diksha having erroneously gained such prominence as the be-all and end-all of sadhana-bhakti. By Bhaktisiddhanta's neglect of the importance of the diksha parampara, he's implying that diksha itself isn't very important, if it all. If the importance is in the siksa parampara, if self-realization is just about jnana and vijnana (gaining spiritual knowledge and experience) rather than a mystic ritual connection to a guru, then what need at all of that mystic diksha connection? Of course a lot of gurus and guru wannabes saw that implication, and didn't like it, not one bit. Bhaktisiddhanta became heavily criticized and disliked by the wider Gaudiya community, even by his own brother Lalita Prasada, who called him a liar and a deviant.

I never heard about siksa sampradaya when I was in ISKCON, it goes against Prabhupada's mood I think, although sometimes some people mention it, but in the conception of the non-essentiality of a strict guru-pranali, I doubt they mention it in the sense of diksha not being important, seeing as ISKCON culture is so heavily focused on being a place for worshiping ISKCON's gurus. This article at Dandavats.com (ISKCON's official news and blogging outlet) http://www.dandavats.com/?p=817 is what I assume is the dominant attitude.

This is a reply to what Michael Schenk wrote in his comment, he wrote:

> Your thoughtful posts have made me re-think my

> attitudes. You have helped me to make peace with my experiences with the Hare Krishnas and even reconsider chanting the maha-mantra.
>
> I would like to ask though, what your thoughts are on chanting the mantra, the so-called “mystic potency” that virtually every Hindu believes their guru to possess, whether this guru thing is relevant or even necessary to sadhana practice and how/why? I would also like to know your thoughts on practicing bhakti and/or Krishna worship in the modern day, where just about every guru is wrong and every group of followers is hell bent on promoting silly ideas and wants to take your money.

Here are some posts where I write about japa meditation. Kirtan is different, having more to do with reciprocation from God than japa, although both do—it’s just that japa has other purposes as well.

I’ve written a lot on guru-tattva (truth about gurus). Essentially, my view is that the pre-modern world was dependent on gurus for spiritual knowledge due to the lack of books, and the lack of an ability to read them, and therefore the scriptural and sage writings from that time on the role of a guru reflects that reality of people’s utter dependence on gurus for spiritual knowledge. Since gurus were the only source of spiritual knowledge for most people, they are very heavily promoted in the books from that world. In the modern world, with modern technology giving fairly easy access to most people the writings of the ancient gurus, scriptures, and brahmin sages, their personal association is no longer so relevant in order for you to become God conscious. But since the books were written when the opposite was true, and those books are sacrosanct for so many ever since, the idea of the guru as the singularly most indispensable aspect of your path to God has been continually promoted as an eternal truth, rather than a relative one, for rather obvious reasons:

1. Many religious people are afraid to neglect whatever is said in scripture

regardless of what it says, or it’s original source in human history. They fear angering God and the angels, they fear losing out on salvation if they are anything but humble and submissive to the literal words of scriptures. We see this phenomena in all religions.

2. The gurus, priests, popes, mullahs, lamas, roshis, pastors—get to be the scripturally sanctioned receiver of your devotional attitude and service. So of course there is a strong incentive for many people to maintain whatever scriptures or past ideals taught about devotion to a guru, even if those teachings are no longer relevant in our time.

My thoughts on bhakti-yoga in the modern day is spelled out all through this blog and would take a long answer to be fully satisfactory—but essentially my view is based on the same original teachings as that which Gaudiya gurus and monks teach from. The difference with them is I believe in a more personal approach to bhakti yoga, rather than a one-size-fits-all attitude they present. People have different needs due to being on different levels of spiritual realization, different levels of faith, and different abilities, mental and physical. I also have disagreements with their interpretation of various philosophical and social teachings. But since we come from the same source, much is also the same, i.e. the need of sravanam, hearing, reading, learning spiritual knowledge presented from the Vedas, Puranas, Pancharatras, etc. for those who need to come close to God. Also chanting is good for you.

All the aspects of sadhana-bhakti are of great help for neophytes. As you gain more knowledge and experience your sadhana should change as well. Some things should be less important and others more so. For neophytes temple worship is very beneficial, for more advanced bhaktas it doesn’t really help or give you what you need to advance. Once you’re closer and more knowledgeable there are more intimate types of sadhana, having more to do with direct experience of yourself and your ontological relationship with God, rather than the schooling and worship needed by neophytes. Meditating on God within, trying to understand God’s presence and control all around you, and your potential relationship with God, that becomes the focus as you advance. As Jiva Goswami says in *Bhakti*

Sandarbha:

In the Gautamiya Tantra it is said:

“For they who are always fallen in love with the lotus feet of Lord Krsna there is no japa, no Deity worship, no meditation, and no rules.”

When attraction (ruchi) is not yet manifested even the best raganuga bhakti is considered to be mixed with vaidhi bhakti. Even a devotee who has attraction (ruchi) for the Lord may, to benefit the people of the world, engage in raganuga bhakti mixed with vaidhi bhakti. Therefore, in some situations it is appropriate to practice raganuga bhakti mixed with vaidhi bhakti.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead declares (in Brahma-yamala, also quoted in texts 9 and 24 of this anuccheda):

“The Sruti and Smrti sastras are My commands. Therefore one who disobeys the scripture disobeys Me. Such a person hates Me. He may claim to be devoted to Me, but in truth he is not.”

These words do not apply to the devotees engaged in raganuga bhakti, for such devotees are already on the right path in spiritual life. Rather, this verse is addressed to they who follow the wrong paths, the paths of heretics and atheists like Buddha, Rsabhadeva, Dattatreya and others.

The scriptures declare:

“A heretic opposed to the religion of the Vedas may worship his own deity. However, he will go to hell until the time when the universe is destroyed by floods.”

Even though many Vedic rules are not followed in it, raganuga bhakti is not outside the path of the Vedas. Actually raganuga bhakti is the perfection of the religion described in the Vedas and the scriptures that explain the Vedas. This is so because raganuga bhakti makes one attracted (ruci) to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the Vedas are described many heretics and atheists, such as Buddha, who are opposed to the Vedas and thus are outside the sphere of Vedic religion. For example, in Srimad Bhagavatam (1.3.24) it is said:

“Then, in the beginning of Kali-yuga, the Lord will appear as Lord Buddha, the son of Anjana, in the province of Gaya, just for the purpose of deluding those who are envious of the faithful theist.”

Therefore raganuga bhakti is proper and correct. It is much better than vaidhi bhakti. The previously discussed rules of the scriptures are meant for [those who seek] merging into the existence of the Lord [to purify non-devotees].

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Take it easy

This post is in reference to a comment I made to Raghu Mishra Dasa on the It Won't Be Long post. He had posted a poem which seemed to me to be at least in part a quote from Prabhupada. So I did a search and I found that the bottom half of his poem was a quote from a purport to a Bhagavad Gita verse. I then responded to Raghu Mishra telling him that I thought his combining of the words from Prabhupada's purport, out of context, and adding them to some other stream of thought, caused the point of Prabhupada's words to be lost or misrepresented.

He responded, and included in what he said was this:

> in a way you make a distinction between the means and the end result in your above reply and I respect your decision to do so however you must know I am a bit of a simpleton focusing on whatever one plus one is actually contributing to maintaining a sense of how it is the method of Krsna consciousness in discussion of course the method goes on regardless

I'm glad he brought this all up, it showcases a problem I see in Prabhupada's books, and not just in the purports. As many of you know, Prabhupada's purports (commentaries to each verse) were written by using the commentaries of previous gurus or acharyas in the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, translating them into English and adding what he wanted from that, and then adding his own words. The problem, from my perspective, is that it's common for Prabhupada's English translation to

lack in clarity when it’s about something deeply philosophical or ontological. If it’s about some history, or story about a sage or king, then those are easier to translate. But when it comes to other topics, often the result is something that goes over most people’s heads because the translations are too cryptic.

The poem by Raghu Mishra Dasa is a good example of not knowing that what he did changed the purpose of what Prabhupada was trying to say. The part of Prabhupada’s purport he quotes is from the following, the part in bold is what he included in his poem:

> This material veil can be removed at once by Krsna consciousness; thus the offering for the sake of Krsna consciousness, the consuming agent of such an offering or contribution, the process of consumption, the contributor, and the result are–all combined together–Brahman, or the Absolute Truth. The Absolute Truth covered by maya is called matter. Matter dovetailed for the cause of the Absolute Truth regains its spiritual quality. Krsna consciousness is the process of converting the illusory consciousness into Brahman, or the Supreme. When the mind is fully absorbed in Krsna consciousness, it is said to be in samadhi, or trance. Anything done in such transcendental consciousness is called yajna, or sacrifice for the Absolute. In that condition of **spiritual consciousness, the contributor, the contribution, the consumption, the performer or leader of the performance, and the result or ultimate gain–everything–becomes one in the Absolute, the Supreme Brahman. That is the method of Krsna consciousness.**

I would bet that most people who read that wouldn’t know what Prabhupada is talking about, especially if they read the translation of the verse he’s commenting on, which is so far off it’s really an interpretation, not a translation. Look at some other translations of the same verse in

comparison to Prabhupada’s Gita:

brahmarpanam brahma havir
brahmagnau brahmana hutam
brahmaiva tena gantavyam
brahma-karma-samadhina

Prabhupada’s Gita
A person who is fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is sure to attain the spiritual kingdom because of his full contribution to spiritual activities, in which the consummation is absolute and that which is offered is of the same spiritual nature.

Ramanand Prasad
Brahman is the oblation. Brahman is the clarified butter. The oblation is poured by Brahman into the fire of Brahman. Brahman shall be realized by the one who considers everything as (a manifestation or) an act of Brahman.

Eknath Easwaran
The process of offering is Brahman; that which is offered is Brahman. Brahman offers the sacrifice in the fire of Brahman. Brahman is attained by those who see Brahman in every action.

Dr. S Sankaranarayan
The Brahman-oblation that is to be offered to the Brahman, is poured into the Brahman-fire by the Brahman; it is nothing but the Brahman that is to be attained by him whose deep contemplation is the said Brahman-action.

Swami Adidevananda
Brahman is the instrument to offer with; Brahman is the oblation. By Brahman is the oblation offered into the fire of Brahman; Brahman alone is to be reached by him who meditates on Him in his works.

Swami Sivananda
Brahman is the oblation; Brahman is the melted butter (ghee); by Brahman is the oblation poured into the fire of Brahman; Brahman verily

shall be reached by him who always sees Brahman in action.

Edwin Arnold
The sacrifice is Brahm, the ghee and grain
Are Brahm, the fire is Brahm, the flesh it eats
Is Brahm, and unto Brahm attaineth he
Who, in such office, meditates on Brahm.

Narayana Maharaja
Brahma can be attained by one who performs yajna in which the sacrificial instruments, the ghee, the fire, the offerings and the priest (agent) are all brahma. Such a person is qualified to attain brahma because he is fully absorbed in karma which is of the same nature as brahma.

As you can see Narayana Maharaja changes it quite significantly, the other translations are all more or less correct, except Prabhupada's Gita, which is an interpretation rather than translation. Eknath Easwaran's is the most literal, and the best. The point Krishna is making is trying to see that God is everything, not just in the substance of everything, but by the controlling of everything. Prabhupada's and Narayana Maharaja's translations miss the point of Krishna using the word samadhina. They both translated samadhina to mean something other than a meditative act, they translate it as absorption in something, but if that was what Krishna meant he would have used a word that wasn't so related to meditation. You can see that almost in every other instance Prabhupada translated samadhina differently, almost exclusively having to do with trance or meditative state. These are the final two lines of the verse:

brahmaiva tena gantavyam
brahma: **brahman**; eva: **truly, really**; tena: **on that account , for that reason**; gantavyam: **to be gone to, attained**

brahma-karma-samadhina
brahma: **brahman**; karma: **actions**; samadhina: **absorbed in**

contemplation

brahmaiva tena gantavyam: **Brahman can really truly be attained by**
brahma-karma-samadhina: **being absorbed in meditating on Brahman in actions**

The word samadhina, which is from samadhi, tells us that we are to meditate on seeing Brahman (God) in all actions—by that samadhi, Brahman is really and truly attained.

Prabhupada and Narayana Maharaja translate those words as Krishna saying that by Brahman actions, spiritual actions, one can attain Brahman. Why would Krishna say “Brahman actions” if he meant spiritual actions? Wouldn’t a different more precise word, a word that actually makes sense, like yajna, have been used if he meant that? This verse is about the nature of Brahman realization, of meditating on seeing Brahman in everything, of being aware of God’s presence at every moment in everything you experience, it’s not about only seeing Brahman in directly related spiritual activities.

Krishna is first saying: “The sacrificial substance is Brahman, the instrument doing the offering is Brahman, Brahman is offering the sacrifice into the fire.” It would make no sense in that context to then say that by spiritual actions you attain Brahman—considering that was what he said in the previous verse. This one is a culmination of that line of thought, in this verse he’s telling us the nature of attaining Brahman—that when self-realized you will see that everything you experience is in truth all Brahman, that you can really truly attain Brahman by meditating on all actions being Brahman, i.e. understand and meditate on God being present and controlling everything and everyone, including yourself—by that you attain Brahman. That vision is the nature of God consciousness.

In the purport quoted above, you can see Prabhupada try to explain that concept, but unless you know what he’s trying to say there’s a good chance you won’t understand, especially seeing how the verse is translated.

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It won't be long

This is a reply to a comment from Bhavaprema to the Jaiva Dharma post. He gave a link to a Dilbert comic strip over at Dandavats.com, it has to do with the brain and free will. After that is an article on free will by Kesava Krsna Das.

The comic made a good point, the author of that comic is a pretty smart guy, although a lot of people dislike him because of his support of Intelligent Design. I skimmed through the article by (the ever so self-assured *Speculatron 9000* of the ISKCON web world) Kesava Krsna Das and the discussion that ensued in the comments. You can see the confusion caused by Prabhupada, none of them seem to have a firm grasp of what they believe or want to say. The problem is that on the one hand the unofficial ISKCON dogma is that we have free will, Prabhupada said it a lot, as do ISKCON leaders; on the other hand we have all the shastric verses saying in essence that we don't have free will, that we're not the doer, that antaryami is in control of us and guides us from within, that paramatma is in control of everything and therefore everything is a direct manifestation of God, etc.

In the discussion that ensues to that article you can see a common misunderstanding about the ontology of the jiva (taught by Prabhupada and ISKCON) used to promote the idea of our free will. The very first commenter quotes Prabhupada:

> **Swedish man (3)**: Is there free will?

> **Prabhupada**: Yes, yes. Just like you are sitting here. If you don't like, you can go away. That's your free will. There is free will. Because we are part and parcel of God, God is completely free to do anything. And because we are part and parcel of God, therefore we have got minute quantity of freedom. Just like a drop of ocean water, it is also salty, but the quantity of salt in that drop is not equal to the salt in the ocean. Similarly, you have got a little quantity of freedom, but not as freedom as God has got. That is not possible. You are subordinate. Your freedom is subordinate to God's freedom. Therefore if you misuse your freedom, then you become punishable. The government gives you freedom, but if you misuse your freedom, if you violate the laws, then you are criminal. Yes? >>> Ref. VedaBase => Bhagavad-gita 7.1-3 — Stockholm, September 10, 1973

What he's teaching is pure sophistry, there is no good analogy between a drop of water in the ocean and the ocean when it comes to abilities or qualities. That analogy only works for less complex comparisons, e.g. the water in the drop and in the ocean is like the soul within God, both exist together as one, two conscious being in one, but one is the whole and existing and encompassing far and wide, and very powerful—while the other is a small part of the whole, and very weak in comparison.

The jiva in no way contains all the qualities of God in minute quantities, although that's a very common fallacy taught in ISKCON. God has many abilities we simply don't possess, for example, the ability to control memory. We don't have the ability to bring up memories, all we do when we want a specific memory is desire it to appear, it then appears or not. What else can we do? We don't have direct access or control over our memories. You can't have free will without control over memories because everything we know, and know how to do—is because of memory. How can you understand language (which is part of the thought process) without memory? How can you move your body in a coordinated fashion without

memory? How can you do practically anything you do without memory? Newborn babies are the way they are because they are without memory—that is how we would be without memory. Unless we control our own memory, we do not have free will.

Without control over what we know, there is no way to have free will. We are dependent on Krishna at every moment for our memory. What we do from moment to moment is entirely based on our memory—how would you know what to do next if you didn't know what day it is, who you are, where you are, what you are, what you planned on doing, or even what words mean or how to comprehend anything in your environment? Krishna says that he gives you memory, and he takes it away when you don't need it, and he gives you knowledge, from within: *sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭo mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanaṁ ca*—I am seated in everyone's heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness.

People who believe God isn't involved in our lives to that degree believe our memories our controlled by our brain. People who aren't in that scientific field believe that it's been proven conclusively that our brain, through some process, controls our memories. The reality is that scientists working in that field don't actually know how memory functions. They believe they know the basic parts and what parts serve what function, but when it comes to explaining how a memory is stored from your experience, or how it's retrieved to your mind, they're still searching.

How does a brain, an unconscious machine, know what you want? Say you're reading this and you get hungry and try to remember what you ate at your friends house last night that you liked so much. How does your brain know that? It's logically impossible that your brain can understand your thoughts. It would need to comprehend the language of your thoughts, AND the concepts of your thoughts like: what does dinner mean? A computer could do that for your speech because a computer has a dictionary and voice recognition software. How can a brain recognize and search for the meaning of the words? It doesn't have the ability to do that, even if it could store memories and retrieve them for you.

Think about how you're comprehending these words. How would you're brain be able to see these words, search in some storage area for the meaning of the words you're reading, then make them understood to your conscious awareness, all done instantly? But before we even get that far it first has to be aware of the thoughts, aware of the needs implied in your thoughts, aware of the need in your unconscious emotional state—essentially it has to have a hyper aware, super smart, super empathic mind of it's own to know what you want, or what you need, when you want or need it. A computer only works because it's been created and programmed specifically for that task, and even then it doesn't work on it's own, it needs to be asked for information. We don't ask our brain, it supposedly just knows what we want when we want it. The amazing thinking brain? I don't think so. People don't always remember what they want when they want it. Why? With a computer it always works because it's been programmed to work, the computer isn't deciding what to give you or what to withhold. But it appears our brain decides what and when to give us the information we desire or need, why? and how?

The scientists say they're working on it, they don't know how the brain does all those things, but they think they know the information is stored in certain places and moves along certain pathways, all the other details are still a mystery. And they will remain so. I've written a bit more on this topic at Things They Would Not Teach Me Of In College.

The topic of free will often causes confusion between Prabhupada's followers because they feel they have to agree with Prabhupada, even if they see the contradiction with shastra, and often-times with himself, i.e. Prabhupada will often teach something one way, and then teach it in a contradictory way elsewhere—for example his teaching on the origin of the jiva has caused a debate for years and years simply because he sometimes said you can and did fall from Goloka, and other times said you can never fall from Goloka, and also that you originated from Brahman.

They even made an official ISKCON law that you cannot contradict what Prabhupada taught on the origin of the jiva, which they then exemplify in the two contradictory teachings Prabhupada taught. The law is senseless

because if you teach either one without also teaching the other, then you are in violation of ISKCON law. Here is the law:

> Vaikuntha is that place from which no one ever falls down. The living entity belongs to Lord Krishna's marginal potency (tatastha-sakti). On this we all agree. The origin of the conditioned life of the souls now in this material world is undoubtedly beyond the range of our direct perception. We can therefore best answer questions about that origin by repeating the answers Srila Prabhupada gave when such questions were asked of him:
>
> "The original home of the living entity and the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the spiritual world. In the spiritual world both the Lord and the living entities live together very peacefully. Since the living entity remains engaged in the service of the Lord, they both share a blissful life in the spiritual world. However, when the living entity, misusing his tiny independence, wants to enjoy himself, he falls down into the material world." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 4.28.54, purport)
>
> No ISKCON devotee shall present or publish any contrary view as conclusive in any class or seminar or any media (print, video, electronic, etc.).

Why did Prabhupada teach in a contradictory way at times? I believe it was because he felt it would inspire people in a certain way. Prabhupada said we have free will, but he also would teach that we don't, for example:

> **Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 13.30**
>
> One who can see that all activities are performed by the body, which is created of material nature, and sees that the self does nothing, actually sees.

PURPORT

This body is made by material nature under the direction of the Supersoul, and whatever activities are going on in respect to one’s body are not his doing. Whatever one is supposed to do, either for happiness or for distress, one is forced to do because of the bodily constitution. The self, however, is outside all these bodily activities. This body is given according to one’s past desires. To fulfill desires, one is given the body, with which he acts accordingly. Practically speaking, the body is a machine, designed by the Supreme Lord, to fulfill desires. Because of desires, one is put into difficult circumstances to suffer or to enjoy. This transcendental vision of the living entity, when developed, makes one separate from bodily activities. One who has such a vision is an actual seer.

Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 3.27

The spirit soul bewildered by the influence of false ego thinks himself the doer of activities that are in actuality carried out by the three modes of material nature.

PURPORT

Two persons, one in Krishna consciousness and the other in material consciousness, working on the same level, may appear to be working on the same platform, but there is a wide gulf of difference in their respective positions. The person in material consciousness is convinced by false ego that he is the doer of everything. He does not know that the mechanism of the body is produced by material nature, which works under the supervision of the Supreme Lord. The materialistic person has no knowledge that ultimately

> he is under the control of Krishna. The person in false ego takes all credit for doing everything independently, and that is the symptom of his nescience. He does not know that this gross and subtle body is the creation of material nature, under the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and as such his bodily and mental activities should be engaged in the service of Krishna, in Krishna consciousness. The ignorant man forgets that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is known as Hrishīkeśa, or the master of the senses of the material body, for due to his long misuse of the senses in sense gratification, he is factually bewildered by the false ego, which makes him forget his eternal relationship with Krishna.

I don’t know what Prabhupada really believed because of the contradictory teachings, possibly he believed we don’t have free will but would say we do so that his followers would feel responsible for being in this world, and conversely responsible for getting out, i.e. only by your choice to surrender to Krishna (through ISKCON) can you become free from future suffering in your next life. Someone may think that if we don’t have free will then there is no urgent need to surrender to ISKCON, whereas Prabhupada was always preaching the urgent necessity to not only surrender to ISKCON, but also to strictly follow all his rules and regulations and give up all desire for sensual pleasures (including entertainment).

Prabhupada’s preaching strategy was to put the jiva (human) in control of it’s destiny to a large degree. It’s by the choice of the jiva to: follow a guru, follow Krishna, renounce sensual pleasures, renounce all things disconnected to sadhana-bhakti, etc. Sure, Krishna is the ultimate controller, but when it comes to our own destiny, we are the controllers because we choose what path we go down in life, creating good and bad karma as we go. In fact we have so much control of our destiny that the reason we are in this world of suffering and death is because of our own choice.

That ideology is contradictory to what Prabhupada's guru taught on destiny. He taught that no one can change anyone else's destiny, no one can change anything at all of the destiny of this world. In ISKCON you hear the exact opposite taught. The mood and message of ISKCON is not only contradictory to Bhaktisiddhanta's mood and message—ISKCON is completely centered around that contradiction.

In ISKCON the main thrust and mood of their self-defined reason to exist is in their ability to not just affect people's lives or destiny, but in actually changing the course of people's lives, changing the course of the cultural norms in society at large, and changing the course of it's own destiny. Prabhupada taught that it's by their efforts that a worldwide nuclear cataclysm was averted. They instil in their followers the idea that you have the ability to not only save people from going to some type of hell, but also you actually have the ability to save the entire planet from a dire fate that awaits.

Not only can you change other people's and the entire world's destiny, ISKCON's fate itself is in our hands i.e. by your choosing to surrender and work hard for ISKCON it will succeed or not. A famous dictum in ISKCON is Prabhupada's statement that the only thing which can stop ISKCON is a lack of cooperation among it's members, that ISKCON can only be destroyed from within. Yet also they teach that ISKCON is predicted to last 10,000 years. This kind of contradictory philosophy is common in ISKCON, and in people who are educated by them.

The idea of having no free will, of there being a destiny set in stone that cannot be altered, for everyone and the world, seems so counter-intuitive only because we are ignorant on how we function. In fact, the world and ourselves have been fooled, on purpose. It's not easy to come to terms with the reality of having no control, of there being a controller over everything you do and think, and of what everyone else does and thinks. When we're ready, all the truths of God's ontological presence and control in our lives is gradually revealed to us. Usually through religious philosophy, and ultimately through Vedanta.

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What's love got to do with it

I want to expand on something from my last post The Love Guru. I was talking about how Radhanath Swami defines bhakti-yoga as service:

> He always says he’s teaching bhakti-yoga; he defines that as selfless love and service to others, and to God. He says that what is missing in religion and human society is selfless service, love, and devotion. Selfless service, love, and devotion to what? To each other, to humanity at large, and to God. This is what he presents as his message of a bhakti-yoga guru.
>
> The reality is that he’s promoting karma-yoga, not bhakti-yoga. Bhakti-yoga is not about selfless service, love, and devotion to your loved ones, friends, society, and also to God. It’s about self-realization, it’s about learning the truth of ourselves, our reality, and God’s relationship with both, and attaining and entering into the highest possible level of human consciousness.

Just like ISKCON, but with the addition of devoted service to others besides God and guru, he misinterprets bhakti-yoga as being all about *seva*, service. That idea of bhakti-yoga is so ingrained in ISKCON that to challenge it brings outright confusion at the thought that bhakti-yoga could mean anything else other than devoted service.

Bhakti can imply service, but it can also imply being served. For example we are told that enjoying prasadam (sanctified food) is an act of bhakti. When we eat prasadam we are being served by God. Bhakti means devotion, adoration, and love. There is an inherent service attitude in devotion, in adoring and loving someone, but it's simply an emotional feeling, an attitude of wanting to give of yourself to the object of your devotion and love. In ISKCON, rather than a service attitude being an aspect of bhakti, it's being taught as the defining principle of bhakti. For all practical purposes in Prabhupada's teachings bhakti is pretty much solely defined as service.

He taught the idea that to become a bhakti-yoga simply requires you to act in service to Krishna. Whatever you do, do it as an offering to Krishna, e.g. if you are good at something, do it for Krishna. If you are an architect, be an architect for Krishna; if you are a doctor, be a doctor for Krishna; if you are an artist, be an artist for Krishna, etc. What does he mean by "do it for Krishna?" He means to do it in service to a guru, preferably for ISKCON's benefit—or at the least do it in some type of proselytizing mode. That idea of bhakti is all pervasive in Prabhupada's and ISKCON's dogma. But is that really what bhakti or bhakti-yoga was originally taught as being all about? Do you that concept of bhakti-yoga taught by the founders of Gaudiya Vaishnavism? I don't think so.

Implications are manifold in any word, but to define a word by one of it's implications is wrong. I believe that bhakti was defined as "devotional service" in all circumstances for a specific purpose by Prabhupada. That purpose was to create an idea of bhakti-yoga as being predominantly about guru-seva (service to a guru) rather than the traditional vision of bhakti-yoga as predominantly a method to discover our full potential as self-realized intimate associates of God.

I think it's best to define the word bhakti in it's straightforward meaning, thereby giving it the chance to be interpreted according to the specific circumstance and context. For example, if shastra states that bhakti-yoga is the highest type of yoga, what should that mean? Should it mean "devotional service," or should it mean trying to develop self-realization,

trying to develop an *intimate* loving relationship with God? Using the term “devotional service” as the definition of bhakti makes it seem that developing an attitude of a servant is what bhakti-yoga is supposed to be about, when in fact developing the attitude of an equal with God, intimate love, is the goal of bhakti-yoga.

Should words be given meanings by what they can imply, or by what they literally mean? Both, but a literal meaning of a word should be the standard definition by which a context can modify it. If you define the word or concept of bhakti as “devotional service,” you change the actual meaning and concept of the word. Bhakti implies many things, service being one of them. But there are other aspects of bhakti as well, i.e. everything that an intimate relationship involves, like getting to know each other (self-realization), and enjoying each others company (rasa).

The word *service*, when added to the word bhakti, contextualizes it to mean a specific act within the wider framework of what bhakti is about. Bhakti implies service, but it also implies self-realization and rasa, in fact the highest form of bhakti is purely about rasa because the devotee is already self-realized, and understands that Radha Krishna is literally doing everything, they understand that God is the controlling principle and literal actor behind all action. Because we are not the doers, therefore in absolute reality — all we can really offer Radha Krishna is rasa. It may appear that we do some physical service, but all physical action is in reality being performed by God. It is only an illusion that we are the doer of any action.

> Bhagavad Gita 9.10
>
> mayadhyakshena prakritih / suyate sa-caracaram
> hetunanena kaunteya / jagad viparivarttate
>
> Prakriti (matter) works under my supervision, *mayadhyakshena prakritih*, manifesting all created things, *suyate sa-caracaram*. This is how the universe works son of Kunti, *hetunanena kaunteya jagad*

viparivarttate.

Bhagavad Gita 13.30

prakrityaiva ca karmani / kriyamanani sarvasah
yah pasyati tathatmanam / akarttaram sa pasyati

All activities taking place, in all respects, are performed by prakriti, *prakrtyaiva ca karmani kriyamanani sarvasah*. Who sees, *yah pasyati*, that the atma is not the doer, *atmanam akarttaram*, he sees, *sah pasyati*.

Bhagavad Gita 18.61

isvarah sarva-bhutanam / hrid-dese ‘rjuna tishthati
bhramayan sarva-bhutani / yantrarudhani mayaya

The supreme controller is at the heart of all beings Arjuna, *isvarah sarva-bhutanam hrid-dese ‘rjuna tishthati*, motivating the movements of all living beings, *bhramayan sarva-bhutani*, who are mounted on the machine of his universal potency, *yantrarudhani mayaya*.

Bhakti in it’s pure meaning is about emotion, attitude, mood, mindset, it’s not about a specific action such as service. The concept where the mood of love automatically includes service is true, but love isn’t only about service, service is an aspect of love, service is an aspect of bhakti. Just like receiving service or love is an aspect of love or bhakti, but we don’t *define* bhakti as “devotional reception.”

One devotee said to me:

Love does not only imply service. It IS service.

Can you love someone and be devoted to them without serving them? Yes, it happens all of the time. Here are a few examples:

1. Someone who loves and is devoted to a famous person they have no opportunity to have a relationship with. But they read and or watch everything about or by that person. They are devoted and love that person even though there is no service involved.

2. Someone who is physically unable to serve their family or friends because of infirmity. Does that mean they cannot love or be devoted to them?

3. Someone who is too shy or feels they are not good enough to associate with a person they love and are devoted to.

4. A young child's love. Young children are unable to do much or any service for anyone, yet they can intensely feel love and devotion.

Love isn't defined as service, it's an emotion, a mood, a mindset. Bhakti is the same.

The problem with so many sources in English of shastra or writings of past acharyas is the poor skills and or agenda of the translator. A good example are the Sandarbhas by Jiva Goswami translated by Kusakratha Das. He changes stuff, omits stuff, and sometimes rewrites Jiva's words so that they seem to be coming from conceptions that Prabhupada taught and wanted to instill into his followers. The result is a distortion of Jiva Goswami's actual teachings. Another example of distortion is below.

From *Sri Sri Prema Bhakti Chandrika* by Srila Narottama Das Thakur with commentaries by Sri Ananta das Babaji Maharaj.

> page 53.
>
> After this Srila Thakur Mahasaya (Narottamadas Thakur) speaks about "Krishna's service". Devotion means service. bhaj ityesa vai dhatuh sevayam parikirtitah (*Garuda Purana*). "The verbal root bhaj is used to indicate service and when the suffix ktin is added the word bhaktipada is created. Therefore the

> word “krishna’s service” refers to the nine kinds of devotion.

What the *Garuda Purana* is saying is what I’m saying, it isn’t saying bhakti means service. *Bhaj* means many things, service though is not the primary meaning:

> **bhaj**: to divide , distribute , allot or apportion to (dat. or gen.) , share with (instr.) RV. &c. &c. ; (A1.) to grant , bestow , furnish , supply ib. ; A1. (rarely P.) to obtain as one’s share , receive as (two acc.) , partake of , enjoy (also carnally) , possess , have (acc. , Ved. also gen.) ib. ; (A1. , rarely P.) to turn or resort to , engage in , assume (as a form) , put on (garments) , experience , incur , undergo , feel , go or fall into (with acc. , esp. of abstract noun e.g. %{bhItim} , to feel terror ; %{nidrAm} , to fall asleep ; %{maunam} , to become silent) MBh. Ka1v. &c. ; to pursue , practise , cultivate Mn. R. Sus3r. ; to fall to the lot or share of (acc.) MBh. R. &c. ; to declare for , prefer , choose (e.g. as a servant) MBh. ; **to serve** , honour , revere , love , adore MBh. Ka1v. &c.: Caus. %{bhAja4yate} , %{-te} (aor. %{abIbhajuH} S3Br. , %{ababhAjat} Gr.) , to divide Su1ryas. ; to deal out , distribute Gaut. ; to cause any one (acc.) to partake of or enjoy (acc. or gen.) RV. S3Br. ; to put to flight , pursue , chase , drive into (acc.) Bhat2t2. ; to cook , dress (food) Vop.: Desid. %{bibhakSati} , %{-te} MBh. (cf. %{bhikS}): Intens. %{bAbhajyate} , %{bAbhakti} , Gr2. [Cf. Gk. $; Lat. &225876[743 ,1] {fa1gus} ; Goth. Old S. {bo1k} ; Germ. {Buch} , {Buchstabe} ; Eng. {buck-} , {beech}.]

The definitions of the word bhaj are given above, “to serve” is way down the list which is given in hierarchical order, i.e. the definitions less and less define the word as you go down the list. Bhaj can mean service, but also many other things are more definitive. A root of a word doesn’t define a

word, if it did what would the need be of so many different words with the same root? The root can imply meaning according to the context of the word.

Therefore that verse from the *Garuda Purana* doesn't mean to say "bhakti means service," as Ananta Das Babaji claims. What it actually says is:

bhaj ityesa vai dhatuh
sevayam parikirtitah

"*Seva* or service is a *dhatu*, an ingredient or constituent part of the root bhaj"—not that bhaj *means* seva.

This is the definition of dhatu:

> **dhAtu**: layer , stratum Ka1tyS3r. Kaus3. ; constituent part , ingredient (esp. [and in RV. only] ifc. , where often= `" fold "' e.g. %{tri-dhA4tu} , threefold &c. ; cf. %{triviSTi-} , %{sapta-} , %{su-}) RV. TS. S3Br. &c. ; element , primitive matter (= %{mahA-bhUta} L.) MBh. Hariv. &c. (usually reckoned as 5 , viz. %{kha} or %{AkAza} , %{anila} , %{tejas} , %{jala} , %{bhU} ; to which is added %{brahma} Ya1jn5. iii , 145 ; or %{vijJAna} Buddh.) ; a constituent element or essential ingredient of the body (distinct from the 5 mentioned above and conceived either as 3 humours [called also %{doSa}] phlegm , wind and bile BhP. [cf. %{purlSa} , %{mAMsa} , %{manas} , Cha1ndUp. vi , 5 , 1] ; or as the 5 organs of sense , %{indriyANi} .[cf. s.v. and MBh. xii , 6842 , where %{zrotra} , %{ghrANa} , %{Asya} , %{hRdaya} and %{koSTha} are mentioned as the 5 dhñdha1tu of the human body born from the either] and the 5 properties of the elements perceived by them , %{gandha} , %{rasa} , %{rUpa} , %{sparza} and %{zabda} L. ; or the 7 fluids or secretions , chyle , blood , flesh , fat , bone , marrow , semen Sus3r. [L. %

{rasA7di} or %{rasa-raktA7di} , of which sometimes 10 are given , the above 7 and hair , skin , sinews BhP.]) ; primary element of the earth i.e. metal , mineral , are (esp. a mineral of a red colour) Mn. MBh. &c. element of words i.e. grammatical or verbal root or stem Nir. Pra1t. MBh. &c. (with the southern Buddhists %{dhAtu} means either the 6 elements [see above] Dharmas. xxv ; or the 18 elementary spheres [%{dhAtu-loka}] ib. lviii ; or the ashes of the body , relics L. [cf. %{-garbha}]).

Look at how that sloka has been misused:

bhaj ityesa vai dhatuh
sevayam parikirtitah
tasmat seva budhaih prokta
bhaktih sadhana-bhuyasi

The verbal root bhaj means to render service.
Therefore, thoughtful sadhakas should engage in the service of Sri Krsna with great endeavor, for it is only by such service that bhakti is born.

Searching Google that is the only translation of that sloka I could find. It's by Narayana Maharaja, from his translation of Bhaktivinoda's *Bhakti-Tattva-Viveka.*

The first part of the sloka I mentioned above. This is the second:

tasmat seva budhaih prokta, therefore service is said by learned people, *bhaktih sadhana-bhuyasi*, to enhance sadhana and bhakti.

As usual Narayana Maharaja adds a bunch of stuff and changes the intent of a verse. This time it's to convince people that bhakti means service, and "only by service is bhakti born." Of course the context of seva within his teachings is that service has to be given to the guru because you are unqualified to serve Radha Krishna directly. So, that sloka changes from

actually saying: “seva is a part of and enhances sadhana and bhakti,” to being all about the absolute necessity for serving a guru “otherwise you will not attain any type of bhakti.”

So once again we see the concept and definition of bhakti subverted to convince people that service, within the wider context of serving a guru, is the most important definition and essential aspect of bhakti-yoga. I have nothing against “service” as being part of bhakti, part of love, part of life, etc. Service to others is part of all of those. But teaching people that ***the*** definition of the word bhakti is “devotional service,” is not accurate, it’s used to try to convince people to develop the concept that bhakti is all about developing an attitude of being a servant of a guru.

Bhakti should not be universally defined as “devotional service” because it misrepresents the true path and goal of bhakti. Bhakti is not about developing an attitude and lifestyle of being a servant of a guru, or even of Krishna. It’s about developing self-realization, developing intimacy with Radha Krishna. Service is part of intimacy with Radha Krishna, but not the definition or purpose of our lives.

I understand that many people are conditioned to see bhakti in terms of a “service attitude” due to extensive exploitative teachings, and that it’s difficult to understand that intimacy (developing the ability to engage in rasa with God) is what Gaudiya Vaishnava bhakti-yoga is supposed to be all about.

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Welcome to the jungle

This is a reply to a comment from Teresa who said it doesn't matter what Prabhupada taught anymore since people are forgetting about him.

I don’t think Prabhupada's ideas are being forgotten, especially in India and Indian communities, where ISKCON is very popular, and getting more popular all the time. I think the fact that ISKCON is so associated with being popular among westerners has more effect on Indians (in India) than even they realize. At first it made ISKCON a curiosity, now it brands them as having the potency to affect non-Hindus in a big way, something most other gurus and sampradayas lack. Indians are quick to respect success as a sign of favor from God. This new massive building in Mayapur is going to have a massive effect on their popularity in India, already their big temples are among the most popular and well known temples in India. Every Janmastami or other major religious holidays if you check the Indian newspapers online, you’ll see all major ones mention activities in the local ISKCON temple for the holiday, with usually just one or 2 other non-ISKCON temples getting any mention. That’s tells us all we need to know about the level of popularity they’re enjoying.

There seems to be two opposing views developing in ISKCON and the wider community on how to present Prabhupada and his teachings. One side tries to present Prabhupada as a fallible human who was presenting a perfect teaching only when he was speaking on “spiritual” topics, e.g. they say that his social or scientific views are not necessarily divine revelation and can therefore be neglected if they were wrong (based on the judgment of whomever).

The opposing side hates that idea and many of them constantly complain about the eroding of Prabhupada's "special position" as some type of superhuman super-perfect superman who should be promoted as the Jesus of ISKCON, i.e. all preaching should be centered around Prabhupada as the one and only savior of mankind for the rest of time; all of his teachings on any topic should be regarded as the perfect divine word of God. You can see their rants on various websites where they're constantly decrying ISKCON's gurus for the sin of presenting themselves on the same level as Prabhupada.

The ritivks take that one step further and proclaim that no one should present themselves as a spiritual master at all. Their reasoning is that the Godlike Prabhupada said that to be a guru you need to be given that role by your guru. They use double-talk and sophistry to reject the fact that Prabhupada said many times he wanted his teachings to create gurus, and even that he wanted all his disciples to be gurus.

Because of the constant vicious attack on anyone who doubts the supreme perfection of Prabhupada, or the demand that he be placed on a special pedestal above everyone else for all time, many of the leaders of ISKCON feel the pressure to make concessions to that segment of the community, e.g. it was written into ISKCON law that the role of the gurus in ISKCON was to connect people to Prabhupada, whereas traditionally the role of the guru is to connect the disciple to God; it was also written into ISKCON law that no one can remain a member if they disagree with anything Prabhupada taught.

The view that Prabhupada is always right isi often backed up with the claim that "everything Prabhupada said was based on scripture." That attitude is taken as a given amon most Prabhupada followers simply because Prabhupada told them so. They have faith that Prabhupada wouldn't be anything but scrupulously honest in all he said or wrote. Even if you prove to them that Prabhupada said or wrote something that wasn't backed up by scripture, they'll often resort to the conception: everything the guru says is scripture. The problem with that is that it makes the other idea of Prabhupada only teaching that which is backed up by scripture,

obsolete. Heads they win, tails you lose.

To see this type of mentality in action there was an article recently published on Dandavats.com, (ISKCON's official blog) on this topic, by someone named Sita Rama das. It's titled *Are We More Intelligent Than Srila Prabhupada!* In it the author goes through ridiculous mental contortions to prove his points:

From http://www.dandavats.com/?p=9866 or http://www.viewdocsonline.com/document/ulvgh9

> Therefore although someone breaks a sacred vow, such as marriage, they are not described by the Srila Prabhupada as evil but simply as weak.
>
> Still, for some devotees the statement by Srila Prabhupada "Generally, separation between husband and wife is due to womanly behavior; divorce takes place due to womanly weakness" doesn't jibe with their perception of reality and they adjust for it in an interesting way. Basically the idea is there are two Srila Prabhupadas. There is a Srila Prabhupada who is absolute and simply repeats the scripture and a Srila Prabhupada who is fallible and speaks his own perspective independent of sastra. In short Srila Prabhupada is wrong and their opinion is right.
>
> I have a litany of problems with this perspective. But I will limit them to how it is applied to the above statement by Srila Prabhupada. First of all there is no basis for saying Srila Prabhupada's statement is not based on sastra.

Then he tries to prove his point that Prabhupada was not only correct, but that it's backed up by scripture. It's almost all about trying to prove that Prabhupada was right by using statistical analysis of various surveys and studies. In no way does his analysis support Prabhupada's contention that

divorce is always caused by women, but using sophistry and deception he thinks he has made a solid argument. I'm not going to comment on that part because it's too ridiculous, if someone can't see the obvious errors in his thinking, then either their intellect needs some serious growth and no amount of argument is going to help them, or they are blinded by devotion to Prabhupada. The funny part is the short amount of proof he uses to show how scripture backs Prabhupada up, at first I thought it might be a joke and Dandavats was being pranked, but sadly, no:

> When Srila Prabhupada makes a point in a purport we cannot say it does not exist in the verse simply because it is not obvious to us. Secondly Srila Prabhupada explains in the Bhagavad Gita that to call a thief a thief is OK but to call an honest man a thief is a product of tama guna and not conducive to spiritual advancement. So there is no possibility that Srila Prabhupada would make a false accusation against women.
>
> I am convinced that Srila Prabhupada's motivation in commenting on the Scriptures is 100% pure. Therefore the above statement must not only be true but the only cause for Srila Prabhupada to say it is that it is a valuable lesson to help us in our march back to Godhead.
>
> So this leaves only one possibility, Srila Prabhupada's statement is correct: ""Generally separation takes place due to womanly behavior; divorce takes place due to womanly weakness."

Yes, that is the entirety of his scriptural support. It shows the degree of delusional thinking among Prabhupada fanatics very succinctly. Even though his argument is nonsensical and shows zero scriptural support, he doesn't seem to notice that, and amazingly thinks he's making a cogent argument. So well of a argument that's it's inspirational enough to post on ISKCON's main blog. No one even called him out on it in the comments.

The other side of the debate is typified by Hridayananda Swami:

> I generally explain that Prabhupada grew up in a different time and culture and this may be reflected in some of his statements on worldly matters. In other words, Prabhupada's teaching on the nature of the soul, God etc are directly based on scripture. Prabhupada consistently taught us that his statements are infallible when he is citing the scriptures. This means that Prabhupada statements not based on scripture are not infallible.

Like I mention in my previous post to him, this is a bit of sophistry. In my previous post I mention how Prabhupada's teaching on the origin of the soul, and therefore original the cause of samsara, is not backed up by scripture. Also, Prabhupada's racism isn't backed up by scripture, and it is directly about the nature of the soul, i.e. it assumes that the quality of a person's consciousness is determined to some degree by their skin color or ethnicity. Shastra does not support that. Also, his claim that to practice raganuga bhakti you have to be a liberated soul, that isn't backed up by shastra—something I've written extensively on. Hridayananda then interestingly has this to say about how ISKCON's leaders are handling this issue:

> There is a growing awareness in ISKCON that we must distinguish between different categories of Srila Prabhupada's statements. In fact, based on my own statements on this topic, the GBC formed a hermeneutic committee which is attempting to rationally categorize Srila Prabhupada's different statements according to sound philosophical, spiritual, and scientific principles.
>
> Prabhupada saved us, he loved us, and therefore he eminently deserves our devotion, despite a few remarks which we may struggle with.

But also he plies us with some more sophistry:

> Interestingly, despite some controversial statements about women, in his own life, Prabhupada treated women with great dignity and respect, as virtually all of his female disciples testify.

I don't think teaching women they shouldn't divorce no matter what; that they enjoy rape (therefore giving men that idea); that they should receive no schooling; that they should marry by puberty otherwise their father has failed them; that they should have no interest in anything but being a submissive housewife with a servant attitude otherwise "they are prostitutes;" is going to win him any feminist awards for "dignity and respect" any time soon (although maybe in the Bizarro World, i.e. ISKCONites)

Teresa also said:

> If there is a hell, he might be burning there.

I don't see it that way. I believe Prabhupada had good intentions. Yes, he knew he was distorting the scriptures and traditional Gaudiya Vaishnava teachings; and he knew he was distorting the true nature of "Vedic culture." But I believe he felt it was necessary, i.e. the ends justify the means. Some of the more immoral or foolish things he taught (extreme racism, extreme sexism, homophobia, antisemitism, child rearing philosophy, moon hoax conspiracy, etc) I believe were due to his ignorance on those things. I believe he was sincere in his belief in those things, and didn't see any harm or foolishness in them.

He could seemingly be very callous or indifferent to the feelings and sufferings of women or children, or of anyone really (the demand to follow all his teachings and submit blindly to ISKCON, or you displease God and may go to hell). But I think it was just his careless nature, which is often the case with elitist minded intellectuals when it comes to spouting off their philosophical views. Often that type of person means no harm, yet their heads are so in the clouds that they don't realize the suffering their

views can promote. It shows a certain level of immaturity, especially if you’re a guru who knows your followers will take you seriously.

Then there is the big picture—Krishna is the controller of everyone’s actions and destiny, everyone and everything is going on according to God’s plan.

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34

You give love a bad name

This is a reply to a comment from hemp to the Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting post.

Hemp wrote:

> Those who become attracted in their hearts as soon as they think of the Lord are worshipping the Lord according to raga. It is imperative that the people of a specific country give proper respect to their native saints but no one although they may hold a particular belief for their spiritual progress should go to other places and preach that what their teachers have taught is superior to all other teachings.

That was a quote a book by Bhaktivinoda Thakura called *Chaitanya Shikshamrita*.

The first line about raga is out of place, it appears earlier in part 1 (which is like an introduction to the book) where he described the difference between raga and vaidhi bhakti .The second part of that paragraph comes later in part 1, it doesn't appear right after that line about raga, He's talking about something else entirely when he starts talking about other religions. He begins talking about how people should see religions other than their own when visiting other countries. He made a few points, the first being that the major religions of the world were one in essence, that God revealed the truth to them in different cultures at different times in

different ways, that the differences in form were not very important, that people should try and understand that God manifests in different ways to different peoples, and therefore people should try and see the Godliness in other religions in other countries rather than causing conflict by denigrating them.

Bhaktivinoda was a proselytizer for Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Proselytizers almost always claim they are presenting the highest truth superior to all others. It's implied that other religions are of a lower quality when you say you have the ultimate truth. So he wasn't against claiming to have the highest truth, he was talking about openly denigrating other religions in their own countries as improper.

I believe that what he wrote was meant for foreigners and Hindus who were in close contact with them at that time. Bhaktivinoda was preaching at times to English and American people, who were mostly Christians, and who were led to believe that all other religions, especially Hinduism, was very much beneath Christianity and that Indian culture was barbaric. They were busy proselytizing in India and trying to convince the Hindus that Hinduism was backwards and foolish, that it had come from an ignorant superstitious stone age culture. That idea of Hinduism was all-pervasive in the English run education system in India, which many of the upper classes sent their children to.They were quite successful in turning many of them off of Hinduism. The result was that many of the upper classes in India rejected Hinduism. Bhaktivinoda himself was affected by that type of ideology, he looked down on India's native religions in his youth with a preference for western religions, and didn't embrace Hinduism until later in life.

The conflict between raga and vaidhi between today's bhaktas has nothing to do with what Bhaktivinoda was writing about. They're in the same religion. The conflict comes from exploitation of, or competition for followers. Prabhupada inculcated in ISKCON a culture of *us* vs *them*, with *us* being the all-perfect, and them or everybody else, being inferior and even harmful to associate with or listen to. He also spoke against devotees thinking they could follow raganuga-bhakti prematurely, usually

denigrating raganuga devotees as sahajiya (pretenders) or lazy and with no dedication. He taught that you had to be self-realized, a pure devotee, and liberated before you were qualified for raganuga. That of course was a complete falsehood, but he went so far as to alter the scriptures to support his vision of raganuga bhakti for ISKCON.

It became standard ISKCON ideology that pretty much no one was advanced enough for raganuga, maybe, maybe, when you're very old, but certainly not when you're younger. The ideology promoted in ISKCON is "work now, samadhi later," the idea being that if you're interested or claiming to be a raganuga bhakta that you're either lazy and without dedication, or you're a fraud because the real advanced devotee would only be interested in devotional "service," i.e working for the guru. Either way they don't want you around if your speak about raganuga bhakti and are not willing to strictly follow and promote only vaidhi bhakti. You don't see raganuga bhakti being talked about in ISKCON, except to denigrate those who promote or follow it as sahajiyas.

Prabhupada openly spoke of his fear that if devotees developed an interest in raganuga it would destroy the preaching spirit in ISKCON.

> Then everything will be finished. Preaching will be finished. In this sahajiyā party, then preaching will be finished. Siddha-praṇālī.
>
> http://www.vanisource.org/wiki/Morning_Walk_–_June_7%2C_1976%2C_Los_Angeles

That was what he said when he heard devotees had formed reading groups for studying *Chaitanya Charitamrita*. At that time devotees hadn't read anything like what was written there from Prabhupada's books. There's discussion of raganuga and more intimate types of Radha Krishna katha, more so than what they were used to reading. For more on that famous episode in ISKCON's history known as the Gopi-bhava clubs, see Reflections on the book authored by Aindra Dasa: The Heart of Transcendental Book Distribution.

Prabhupada's reaction was typical of the mood he promoted in ISKCON, a mood of intolerance for paying attention to your own spiritual evolution in your own relationship with Radha Krishna. The mood promoted is awe and reverence, any type of intimate mood is only tolerated as long as it's in the mood of a menial fallen servant. Look at the deity worship mood promoted and you can see how that reflects their own personal mood towards Radha Krishna. They always refer to the deities in awe and reverence, and especially fear and trepidation. They fear to offend with anything but a lowly servant mentality. They are engrossed in worship as a servant to a master, and will not tolerate any other mood. They immediately become suspicious and start throwing around epithets like sahajiya if you show you have some mood other than menial and slavish.

Prabhupada developed an anti-raganuga mood in ISKCON, it's still seen in many of his followers even after they leave ISKCON. They remain wary of other gurus or anyone who promotes raganuga, usually calling them sahajiyas. You can see this on the Sampradaya Sun website which is popular among bitter ex-ISKCON members who have issues with ISKCON's gurus, and "deviations" from 100% adherence to everything they think Prabhupada wanted. Whenever Narayana Maharaja is mentioned he's usually called a sahajiya. Why? Because he promoted raganuga bhakti, and he also claimed that Prabhupada didn't get around to speaking about raganuga because his followers weren't ready at that time. He used an analogy of clearing a forest, he claimed that Prabhupada only had time to clear the land, he was too busy cleaning up the forest and bush, making the land suitable for living. Narayana Maharaja doesn't have to do that, he came in after the land is already cleared and is ready to use the land. He was referring to his coming to teach Prabhupada's followers about raganuga bhakti. For that he is criticized by ISKCON and many Prabhupada followers for doing what they had been led to believe by Prabhupada was only fit for the most advanced (and therefore elderly) devotees. By "most advanced" they meant at most just a handful of very rare souls.

In ISKCON the psychology created is that raganuga is for bhaktas who had attained the practically unattainable. It's drilled into your subconscious by Prabhupada and his followers that humility is the hallmark of devotion. But

not just any type of humility, not humility in the sense of seeing whatever you are or do as coming from God. The type of humility they see and promote as the sign of a true devotee is in seeing yourself as a fallen soul, seeing yourself as worthless and low, seeing yourself as “lower than the straw in the street,” seeing yourself as someone who offended God in the past and is now trying to make up for that past personal evil. The idea being that you are a person who went bad, and now you need to acknowledge your lowness and work to rectify your sinful nature. The psychology from Prabhupada and his followers creates the idea that as you spiritually advance you develop low self-esteem, you recognize that you are a sinner, and that Krishna is merciful saving you from yourself. They teach that advanced devotees see themselves as not advanced, see themselves as “the most fallen.” What that does is automatically make raganuga out-of-bounds if you have that vision of what it means to be advanced. How can you see yourself as advanced enough for raganuga when the sign of advancement is seeing yourself as not being spiritually advanced?

That paradoxical and conflicting ideology is what happens when you misunderstand what the actual teachings on the qualification for raganuga bhakti actually are. Prabhupada’s mistranslations and deceptive teachings on the qualification for raganuga are the cause of the confusion. The teachings are very clear and very simple, Prabhupada changed them into unclear and self-contradictory. If you have to be very advanced-advanced for raganuga, how can you ever be advanced enough if the sign of advancement is seeing yourself as fallen? I have already gone into detail on this blog in several posts about the changes Prabhupada made to the teachings on the qualifications for raganuga in his books and lectures. Every single time the qualification for raganuga bhakti is spoken of by Mahaprabhu or Rupa Goswami, Prabhupada adds words to theirs, which are not there in the original. Those words are “self-realized, pure devotee, liberated” and the like. Raganuga bhakti has a sole qualification spoken of by Mahaprabhu and the previous acharyas whenever they spoke about it:

Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 22.155

tat-tad-bhāvādi-mādhurye
śrute dhīr yad apekṣate
nātra śāstraṁ na yuktiṁ ca
tal lobhotpatti-lakṣaṇam

tat-tat — respective; bhāva-ādi-mādhurye — the sweetness of the loving moods (namely śānta-rasa, dāsya-rasa, sakhya-rasa, vātsalya-rasa and mādhurya-rasa) of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana; śrute — when heard; dhīḥ — the intelligence; yat — which; apekṣate — depends on; na — not; atra — here; śāstram — revealed scriptures; na — not; yuktim — logic and argument; ca — also; tat — that; lobha — of covetousness to follow in the footsteps; utpatti-lakṣaṇam — the symptom of awakening.

When an advanced, realized devotee hears about the affairs of the devotees of Vṛndāvana — in the mellows of śānta, dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya and mādhurya — he becomes inclined in one of these ways, and his intelligence becomes attracted. Indeed, he begins to covet that particular type of devotion. When such covetousness is awakened, one’s intelligence no longer depends on the instructions of śāstra [revealed scripture] or on logic and argument.

PURPORT

This verse is also found in the Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.292).

Prabhupada changed the original meaning of this verse by inserting the English phrase “When an advanced, realized devotee” at the beginning. That’s not in the original text, as you can see in the word for word translation. This is a more correct translation:

When someone hears about the sweet relationships of the

devotees of Vrndavana — he becomes inclined in that way, and his intelligence becomes attracted. Indeed, he begins to covet that particular type of devotion. When such covetousness is awakened, one's intelligence no longer depends on the instruction of sastra, revealed scripture, logic or argument.

Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 8.220

sei gopī-bhāvāmṛte yāṅra lobha haya
veda-dharma-loka tyaji' se kṛṣṇe bhajaya

SYNONYMS

sei — that; gopī — of the gopīs; bhāva-amṛte — in the nectar of the ecstasy; yāṅra — whose; lobha — attachment; haya — is; veda-dharma — religious principles of the Vedas; loka — popular opinion; tyaji' — giving up; se — he; kṛṣṇe — unto Kṛṣṇa; bhajaya — renders loving service.

TRANSLATION

One who is attracted by that ecstatic love of the gopīs does not care about popular opinion or the regulative principles of Vedic life. Rather, he completely surrenders unto Kṛṣṇa and renders service unto Him.

The verse doesn't mention "he completely surrenders unto Kṛṣṇa and renders service unto Him." It actually says:

One who has a strong desire or who hankers (lobha) for the immortal nectar of the bhava of the gopis, worships Krishna (kṛṣṇe bhajaya), renouncing scriptural and societal rules and regulations (veda-dharma-loka)

The verse is about inner development of bhava and rasa. As we see in the previous verse above by Mahaprabhu, it's not necessary to have the hankering to be a gopi to be qualified for raganuga, the point is intimacy.

The gopis are used as an example because madhurya-bhava, the sexual relationship, is the most intimate.

The word bhajan is an interesting word that is usually translated as worship, here Prabhupada translates bhajaya as “completely surrenders unto Kṛṣṇa and renders service unto Him”. His intent is to make it seem like the verse is about submissive physical service.

The root *bhaj* means different things other than worship:

> sharing or participating in , entitled to , possessing , enjoying , perceiving , feeling

Bhajan isn’t about worship in the sense of worshiping a deity or a being you submit to in a submissive posture, it’s about entering into and participating and enjoying a shared relationship. Worship in the sense of “He worships her every move while making love”. It’s about development of intimate bhava and rasa. Whereas Prabhupada makes it about surrender and service of the bhakta to God, where instead it’s supposed to be about a shared intimacy between friends and lovers.

Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 8.222

> vraja-lokera kona bhāva lañā yei bhaje
> bhāva-yogya deha pāñā kṛṣṇa pāya vraje
>
> SYNONYMS
>
> vraja-lokera — of the planet known as Goloka Vṛndāvana; kona — some; bhāva — mood; lañā — accepting; yei — anyone who; bhaje — executes devotional service; bhāva-yogya — suitable for that spiritual attraction; deha — a body; pāñā — getting; kṛṣṇa — Lord Kṛṣṇa; pāya — gets; vraje — in Vṛndāvana.
>
> TRANSLATION
>
> In his liberated stage the devotee is attracted by one of

the five humors in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. As he continues to serve the Lord in that transcendental mood, he attains a spiritual body to serve Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana.

The actual verse says nothing about having to be “In his liberated stage.” A few verses earlier in the above Mahaprabhu gives the actual qualification for following raganuga-bhakti — lobha, simply the hankering to be in a relationship with Radha Krishna. That is it, nothing more. Prabhupada consistently changes that teaching on the qualification for taking up raganuga-bhakti, making it seem like the authentic teachings say that only very advanced self-realized or liberated souls are qualified.

Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 22.156-157

bāhya, antara, — ihāra dui ta’ sādhana
‘bāhye’ sādhaka-dehe kare śravaṇa-kīrtana
‘mane’ nija-siddha-deha kariyā bhāvana
rātri-dine kare vraje kṛṣṇera sevana

SYNONYMS

bāhya — externally; antara — internally; ihāra — of this spontaneous love of Godhead; dui — two; ta’ — indeed; sādhana — such processes of execution; bāhye — externally; sādhaka-dehe — with the body of an advanced devotee; kare — does; śravaṇa-kīrtana — hearing and chanting; mane — the mind; nija — own; siddha-deha — eternal body or self-realized position; kariyā bhāvana — thinking of; rātri-dine — night and day; kare — executes; vraje — in Vṛndāvana; kṛṣṇera — of Lord Kṛṣṇa; sevana — service.

TRANSLATION

There are two processes by which one may execute this rāgānugā bhakti — external and internal. When self-

> realized, the advanced devotee externally remains like a neophyte and executes all the śāstric injunctions, especially those concerning hearing and chanting. But within his mind, in his original, purified, self-realized position, he serves Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana in his particular way. He serves Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours a day, all day and night.

The phrase:

“When self-realized, the advanced devotee externally remains like a neophyte and executes all the śāstric injunctions”

— that’s not in the text, it is not what Mahaprabhu is teaching here at all. Sadhaka-dehe just means any person who practices bhakti-yoga sadhana. The verse actually says:

> (Raganuga) Sadhana should be performed both externally and internally. First, one should engage the body and external senses in the processes of sravana and kirtana (hearing and chanting). Next, internally, one should engage the mind to think of one’s own siddha-deha (spiritual body), and in that spiritual body conceived within the mind to day and night perform seva to Krsna in Vrndavana.

In *Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu* Rupa Goswami describes the qualification for vaidhi and raganuga bhakti:

> yatra ragan avaptatvat
> pravrttir upajayate
> sasanenaiva sastrasya
> sa vaidha bhaktir ucyate
>
> When bhakti is not roused in the heart of an individual from a spontaneous love or liking for it, but is called up by the injunctions of the Scriptures, it is called Vaidhi-Bhakti

tat-tad-bha’ vadi-madhurye
srute dhir yad apeksate
natra sastram na yuktim ca
tal lobhotpatti-laksanam

When someone hears about the sweet relationships of the devotees of Vrndavana — he becomes inclined in that way, and his intelligence becomes attracted. Indeed, he begins to covet that particular type of devotion. When such covetousness is awakened, one’s intelligence no longer depends on the instruction of sastra, revealed scripture, logic or argument.

Prabhupada changed the second verse above by inserting the phrase “When an advanced, realized devotee” at the beginning as shown above:

All that is required to take up the path of raganuga bhakti is the desire to be in a relationship with Radha Krishna, Rupa says all that is required is lobha (lobhotpatti-laksanam). Visvanath Chakravarti Thakura comments on that in his *Raga Vartma Chandrika*

Srila Rupa Goswami has personally given the following definition of lobha :

When the heart yearns for the sweetness of the moods of Krishna and His eternal associates in Vraja, and one is not prompted by scriptural injunctions or logical arguments, then that is the definition of sacred greed.

If one thinks “let such greed arise in me also”, after hearing about moods such as the transcendental conjugal mood toward Krishna of His associates the gopis in Vraja, then one need not wait for suitable sanctions from the revealed scriptures or logical arguments.

If such impetuses are there, then it cannot be justly

> called lobha. This greed never arises in anyone on such basis, nor does the candidate ever consider whether he is qualified for the path of raganuga bhakti or not.
>
> Rather, simply after hearing about the subject matter, or seeing it, that greed will arise in him.
>
> There are two causes for the appearance of greed:
>
> The mercy of God or the mercy of another anuragi devotee.
>
> There are again two kinds of mercy bestowed by a devotee:
>
> Praktana and adhunika. Praktana means mercy bestowed by a raganuga in a previous life, and adhunika is mercy bestowed in the present birth.
>
> The praktana devotee takes shelter of the lotus feet of a raganuga guru after the greed has arisen in him, and the adhunika will get that greed only after having surrendered to the feet of such a guru.
>
> It is said: “The only causes of the appearance of greed is the mercy of Krishna or His devotee. Therefore some call the path of raganuga bhakti pusti marga.

That is the authentic teachings of Gaudiya Vaishnavism on the difference between vaidhi and raganuga bhakti. Prabhupada, on the other hand, taught a very different conception — that if you think you are qualified for raganuga bhakti than most likely you are a sahajiya, and if you preach about raganuga you are a demon! He was trying to steer people away from raganuga, even though traditionally raganuga was taught as the central teaching and aspect of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Why did he do that? He didn’t want his followers spending their time trying to develop their relationship with Radha Krishna, instead he wanted them working full-time

to spread his teachings and expand his movement. Gaudiya Vaishnava bhakti-yoga was transformed from being all about personal development of your relationship with Radha Krishna, into being all about working for the guru. Let's hear from one of ISKCON's biggest guru's give an explanation of this new meaning of raganuga bhakti:

> Sometimes we see that people are introducing raganuga bhakti and claiming that Srila Prabhupada did not give raganuga bhakti and that's why the ISKCON devotees must leave ISKCON and go to them to cultivate raganuga bhakti and go to them and so on and so forth.
>
> Let us consider what is raganuga bhakti. The definition of raganuga bhakti is to follow the ragatmika bhaktas of Vrindavan, those who are completely absorbed in the loving attachment to Krsna, the residents of Vrindavan. The associates of Krsna in Vraja are the ragatmika bhaktas. And raganuga, following their footsteps, anu means to follow, when one practices devotional service following their footsteps, that is called raganuga. So in simple words, to follow an associate of Krsna of Vraja is raganuga bhakti.
>
> Now who is the most exalted associate of Krsna in Vraja? Srimati Radharani. And who is Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu? Caitanya Mahaprabhu is Krsna in the mood of Srimati Radharani. So Caitanya Mahaprabhu's activities are the activities of Radharani. Those who are following in the footsteps of Srimati Radharani, what kind of devotees are those? Raganuga-bhaktas. And what is Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's teaching?
>
> yare dekha, tare kaha `krsna'-upadesa
> amara ajnaya guru hana tara' ei desa

Whoever you see preach to him the process of Krsna consciousness, teach him about Krsna and the teachings of Krsna. So preaching is the teaching of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the mood of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He himself did that traveling all over India distributing Krsna consciousness. So following the footsteps of Caitanya Mahaprabhu is raganuga bhakti.

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35

Dancing in the light

This is a reply to a comment from sridhar visvanath to the We Used To Play For Silver, Now We Play For Life post.

It looks like you've been involved in Vaishnavism to some degree for quite some time, at least since when Kundali was doing his thing, what 10 years ago or so? I'm not sure when he started. Vaishnavism promotes the conception that you have no free will, it's explicitly taught in the Gita and the Bhagavatam that we are completely under the control of Krishna. It's not my new revelation, it's just that Vaishnavism has been misrepresented by Prabhupada and many others so much that most of the people who learn from them think Vaishnavism teaches that you do have free will. If you take their commentary and teachings as authentically representing the shastra — even though it's in direct contradiction to what shastra actually teaches right in front of your eyes, you will likely think you do have free will because it feels like you do.

You wrote:

> If God is eternal and I am eternal as a small part, what is this "time" thing. Is it just a part of our illusion, a Maya. If so, then
> How is Time dealt with in GV philosophy in the NFW theory.

Time is simply the ongoing eternal present. Quantum theory get's a lot of things wrong because there is much more influencing matter/energy than

what is perceivable by material means. The famous analogy is of the blindfolded men trying to describe an elephant while each one is only touching a single part. One man says the elephant is like a snake because he's touching the trunk; another says it's like a bird because he's touching the ear; another says it's like wood because he's touching the tusk. Without being able to feel the entire elephant, a blindfolded person will be misled by his sensory perception into thinking the elephant is something it isn't.

The universe is like the elephant. Because material instruments can't perceive what's going on beyond 3 dimensions and time, we only see parts of an unknown quantity. Just like if we examine our body, we won't perceive the mind or consciousness with material instruments because they exist in dimensions beyond the purview of material instruments. Material instruments can perceive the effects of mind and consciousness in a body, but they can't directly read thoughts or perceive consciousness. That's why the study of memory has been such a difficulty. Most scientists believe memory is stored in the brain, but since memories are thoughts, and instruments can't perceive thoughts, they've never been able to find where or how memories are stored. It's all speculative.

Quantum physics is full of problems because the theories are based on an incomplete understanding of matter/energy, i.e. they don't know anything about the influence of other dimensions. It's like trying to understand a human without knowing we have a mind and consciousness.

Time is the same whether we have free will or not. How we experience time is not based on our will, either way we travel through time in the same way as anything else. The entire infinite universe exists only in the present moment, and because it's infinite, it's eternal. We call that eternally continuous existence or continuum, time. The only entity that experiences time differently from us is God. God is experiencing a lot more time at every moment than jiva souls due to being present everywhere with full conscious awareness of everything.

You wrote:

> At this point, I dont see a soul, i dont realize it. When I think, it is only sense of Mind that I have. hence at this point, I am using my mind to follow my mind.

You are the consciousness which is experiencing everything. You, your conscious self-awareness, experiences thoughts [the mind]. You said you “don’t see a soul,” but you experience yourself experiencing the mind. The conscious observer experiencing the mind and everything else, is the soul. The mind influences the conscious observer/experiencer, but the mind is not the one doing the observing or experiencing because the mind is just thoughts and concepts, produced and controlled by God. Emotions are different from the mind. The conscious self or soul, emotes feelings of joy, sadness, lust, excitement, humor, seriousness, etc. Emotions are not the product of the mind, just influenced by it.

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36

Devil inside

Seeker has asked some important questions in a comment to the Purporting post which I want to make a post out of.

Seeker wrote:

> So, is this a correct paraphrasing of the GV philosophy? Desire to attain Krishna also arises in our mind and that is also controlled by Krishna. So, there is no concept of ‘original sin’ (became averse to Krishna initially) or the concept of the jiva failing to play his part in the lila. In other words, it takes away the sense of responsibility from the jiva for not attaining Krishna prema.
>
> […]
>
> In essence, is there any reason for the jiva to feel guilty about? If so, then what is the responsibility of the jiva? I apologize if you have already covered these points in your previous writings implicitly or explicitly. It will be helpful to get a summary of the jiva’s responsibility or his duties, if any, in attaining Krishna-prema.

I’ve covered them, but not very much. About guilt — we have no actual guilt as we have no free will. Krishna specifically points this out in the Gita 18.66:

> Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto

Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear.

People often don't understand the full meaning of this verse, they think it just means that if you accept Krishna as God and guru that the reactions to all your past sins, your karma, will be washed away. The deeper meaning is that if you accept what Krishna says you will understand that you have no sins nor sinful reactions because you have no free will, that it's all been about an evolutionary process to bring you to higher and higher levels of consciousness.

People without faith or even with different faiths could and do argue that this "fatalist" (from "fate" not "fatal") philosophy can lead to all sorts of evil or self-harm because you believe you're not responsible for your actions; and that you shouldn't try to affect anyone else's destiny because everyone is getting what they deserve or need by God's will. Therefore you won't be compassionate and help people in need, and you may not try to succeed or better yourself in life because you'll just accept your lot in life as your fate.

Those beliefs are due to ignorance of reality. We always do as Krishna guides us whether we are aware of the truth of God's control over us or not, we have no choice to help or not help someone, we have no choice to harm or not harm someone, even ourselves — as Krishna told Arjuna:

yad ahankaram asritya / na yotsya iti manyase
mithyaiva vyavasayas te / prakritis tvam niyokshyati

You were thinking that you will not fight, *na yotsya iti manyase*. But that is due to your misconception of your self and reality, *yad ahankaram asritya* . That resolution was in vain, *mithyaiva vyavasayas te*, prakriti (Krishna's universal nature) will engage you (make you fight), *prakritis tvam niyokshyati*.

svabhava-jena kaunteya / nibaddhah svena

karmana
karttum necchasi yan mohat / karishyasy avaso
‘pi tat

Your desire is illusory, *karttum necchasi yan mohat*. Bound by actions, *nibaddhah svena karmana*, born of your nature son of Kunti, *svabhava-jena kaunteya*, helpless, you will act *karishyasy avaso ‘pi tat*.

isvarah sarva-bhutanam / hrid-dese ‘rjuna
tishthati
bhramayan sarva-bhutani / yantrarudhani
mayaya

The supreme controller is at the heart of all beings Arjuna, *isvarah sarva-bhutanam hrid-dese ‘rjuna tishthati*, motivating the movements of all living beings, *bhramayan sarva-bhutani*, who are mounted on the machine of his universal potency, *yantrarudhani mayaya*

In paraphrased simpler terms:

> You didn’t want to harm your relatives and thought you could leave and not fight, but that was because you don’t understand the truth of your relationship with me — I am inside you and control you completely because you cannot function without me, you will do what I want you to do, and I want you to fight, so you will fight.

So why do people suffer from painful events in life if they’re not getting reactions to things they’re guilty of doing in the past? What’s the point of karma if you have no free will? How can you be responsible for things you have no control over?

Karma is not about punishment or reward, as is often thought and taught. It’s about evolution of consciousness through experience. Pain is

something that strongly imprints on your consciousness, painful memories are the most vivid. We need to learn to be compassionate and loving, it's not something that we're born with. We're born a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate, an unmolded piece of clay with potential to be formed into an exquisite work of art. Suffering causes us to develop deep felt empathy and compassion. Plus, not everything you see in the world is as true as it seems to be to your vision. A lot of things going on are not as real as you may think, all will be revealed in time.

As for your other question about desire, you wrote:

> My earlier understanding has been as follows: I have never interpreted freewill to mean that we have control over our thoughts, actions, etc..,and so I am able to follow that part of the philosophy from your writings. However, my understanding was that the desire to think of Krishna, desire to get into a relationship with Him, etc.., – only the desire to attain Krishna-prema is part of our freewill. For example, when Mother Yasoda was trying to bind Krishna with a rope, it was always falling two inches/two fingers short – and I remember hearing a lecture wherein it was stated that the previous acaryas have commented on that as follows: One finger represents the desire of the jiva and even if that is taken care, the other finger represents the mercy of Krishna. So, bhakti is ultimately the causeless mercy of Krishna. I took this metaphor to drive home the philopsophical point that the jiva has a free will to desire Krishna and only then, Krishna will reciprocate accordingly.

Our desire to be with Krishna is also controlled, but it's also natural to want to be with Krishna, it's not like it's some unpleasant thing being forced on us. Radha Krishna is the most talented, charming and fun person to be around, so of course everyone wants to be with God if they are sane. We do desire but we can't control that desire because we're influenced by

Krishna in different ways, i.e. education and knowledge, what we experience in life, and direct mind control. Why would Krishna control us in so many ways and yet not control us to want to be with her/him? Why wouldn’t we want?

Krishna reciprocates with us all the time regardless of our desire or knowledge. We are with Krishna all of the time, we just don’t recognize that reality (we are not alone in our bodies) from moment to moment until we are ready to deal with it. The idea that Krishna will not reciprocate with us openly, directly and personally, until we desire it, is true, but when that occurs is not under our control. Krishna is not going to all of a sudden force you to deal with the absolute truth of his/her presence and control of your mind until you are ready to handle it. It takes an evolved consciousness to be able to deal with it, and even than it takes a long time to get used to it and become expert at relating with paramatma to our full potential.

It’s not that we’ll ever completely stop thinking we’re in control of our thoughts from moment to moment. That won’t happen even though we come to understand we are actually not controlling those thoughts. There will always be a back and forth with Radha Krishna speaking directly to you in your mind and than having you speak back in your mind, even though you know you’re not in control of your thoughts. It’s the same if you are self-realized and have a physical conversation with them. If you spoke to Radha Krishna standing in front of you, and you know you have no control over your actions or words or thoughts, how would you engage in a conversation? That’s why you’re trained in the mind first. You’ll simply be made to forget for a moment that you have no control and then speak as if you do.

It’s confusing at first and takes time to get used to, but it’s the highest way Radha Krishna can enjoy a realistic relationship with a jiva. Without the jiva understanding all of this, it’s not as satisfying a relationship for Radha Krishna. It’s much more intimate for God when we understand ourselves perfectly. When we identify ourselves fully with Krishna’s control, the true difference between our selves and Krishna is lost to a

good degree, and therefore the rasa (emotional experience) in our relationship is lessened. Because we are so used to misidentifying ourselves as doing or controlling what Krishna is doing and controlling, since birth, and are so conditioned to it, it takes time to get used to the truth, it doesn't happen overnight.

I know that some teachings from some Gaudiya gurus teach that in Goloka, in Krishna lila, that the jivas are unaware that Krishna is God, that it's actually a higher rasa for Radha Krishna if we forget, and some advocate that even they forget about the truth, for the sake of a more pleasurable rasa.

But that is not the actual situation. Those teachings are metaphorical, their true message presents a different idea than a literal reading, which is the case for all of the writings on rasa-lila. It's better for rasa if we do forget the truth, but like I said above, it's limited to when Krishna has you think you're in control of your thoughts, words, or actions for the purpose of relating in a smooth and comfortable way, to him/her or anyone else. We won't completely forget everything about Krishna or self-realization, we will simply forget momentarily that we're not in control and then we will speak or act as if we are in control.

Seeker wrote;

> Is this understanding correct or is it diametrically opposite to the tenets of GV? Krishna has written a script for all the jivas to move towards Him and so, the only thing left for the jiva is to understand this fact by the grace of Krishna and remain the observer without being attached to any of the 'drama' orchestrated by Krishna through the modes of material nature – thoughts, actions, pious or impious activities, etc.., This cannot be twisted out-of-context to mean that we don't have to do anything for that is impossible in the first place. As Krishna advises Arjuna, inaction is not a possibility since the modes of material nature will push

> towards action. So, the only scope for us is to get rid of the illusion that we are in control of anything at all – either thoughts/actions related to material activities or even the desire/thoughts/actions in relation to Krishna.

That is pretty much correct. I wouldn’t worry about being detached from worldly ‘drama’ — simply because we have no control over what we may think. Krishna may want you to feel attached, at least momentarily. We just need to learn the truth, over time it becomes second nature, but memory of the truth can always be obfuscated momentarily by Krishna, and in fact will be, even when fully self-realized. We just need to learn to go with the flow and not feel guilt about not being perfectly aware of total absolute truth at every moment. It’s not going to happen. Guilt is simply based on ignorance, and Krishna knows perfectly well you’re not in control and therefore not responsible and not guilty of anything.

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Final fantasy

Over in the comments to the Fiesta Forever post, I've been having a discussion with bhavaprema on various topics related to the concepts of free will and God's control over us. This post is going to be responding to his latest comment, I thought it a good idea to make it a post.

bhavaprema, your understanding where you wrote the following is perfectly correct:

> The yogi actually must release the misconception of control over his/her own mind and destiny, and realize it is under the control of the supreme self (paramatma). Thus being conscious of Krsna as the cause of all causes, the ishvara (owner and controller) of everything animate and inanimate, Krsna begins to gradually reveal Himself in more intimate ways to the yogi. What an exciting ride! What a long strange trip it's been!

Specifically, Radha Krishna (God is not only male) starts to talk to the yogi. Both directly in the mind, but also through revealing our dual nature with God, i.e. God is literally the soul of our soul, we are not single beings, each of us is a dual being, part of God's consciousness. God reveals that nature more and more as you become more self-realized and we begin to experience life as part of a soul twin. As we advance more we are able to handle the truth more and more as Krishna gradually reveals the true nature of our reality more and more by revealing the truth of God's complete and constant presence and control over everything. Not only in

you and your mind, but also over your body and everyone and everything else in your environment. This is what Sanatana Goswami wrote in his *Brhad-bhagavatamrta* on how he received inspiration to write it, how it was revealed to him by paramatma:

> bhagavadbhaktizAstrANAmayaM sArasya saMgrahaH|
> anubhUtasya caitanyadeve tatpriyarUpataH|| (1.1.11)
>
> This is a collection of the essence of the scriptures on bhakti for Bhagavan as perceived in Caitanyadeva from his dear form.
>
> anubhUtasyeti bahirantaHkaraNadvAvAtmasAtkRtasya kutra caitanyadeve cittAdhiSThAtRzrivAsudeve ityarthaH
>
> “Perceived” or “experienced” means personally experienced by means of my external and internal senses. Where? in my consciousness, that is, in Vasudeva who is the overseer of my mind (citta).

In a previous post I compared the truth of reality to a computer generated virtual reality game:

> Once inside the VR world you have a body and can interact with the environment, but the environment is all comprised of bits and bytes, and because of that the person in control of the computer can create and control whatever they desire. The nature of our world is actually very similar to a VR world, just with a much more sophisticated technology behind it. In a computer VR everything you see is comprised of bits of data translated onto a visual and audio platform. Our world is comprised of quantum bits or particles of matter/energy.

I compared God to the computer and the controller of the computer in a

virtual reality game. In Vedanta, God is fundamentally described as shakti and shaktiman, prakriti and purusha — the energy aspect of God and the controller or controlling aspect of God — the universal power and the universal powerful. In the VR analogy the hardware and software of the computer would be the shakti or prakriti, the energy aspect, the universal power of God. The superuser, or person who has total control over the VR by being in control over the computer it runs on, is like shaktiman or purusha, the controller of shakti and prakriti, the aspect of God in control over the universal power of God.

My point in the analogy is to show how God can relate to us through what we experience in this world. God controls everything like a person who is in total control over a virtual reality environment. Not only is God in control at all times, and can therefore make anything manifest or happen, but also God wrote out a script for everyone that only God knows, and is revealed as our lives unfold. Life is in that sense like an RPG video game (Role Playing Game) like *Final Fantasy*. Everything is happening under a controlled, planned out, scripted environment, and you are the central character in the story. When you reach an advanced level you get more powers, specifically God, or the controller of the universal computer, starts to speak to you and establishes a close relationship with you — using God's control over the environment and everyone in it to relate directly to you. Like a medium for a spirit, this world and everyone in it becomes a channeller for God to speak to you in various ways, similar to how the writers of the RPG video game software can speak specifically to you, as themselves, through their control of what you experience in the game. That doesn't actually happen in RPG games, but they have the ability to do that due to their control of the game.

Eventually when you become experienced enough and reach the highest level, God manifests to you in human form(s) for you to live with. When your knowledge and experience has reached the apex of self-realization, and you have developed your relationship enough, that relationship will transfer to a physical one.

You also wrote:

> What you said is truth. I now see that the true understanding of shastra is the ability to see the correct context of the truth as explained for various degrees of spiritual realization. This ability comes from experience and progressive realization…just as you've verified.
>
> Being previously convinced in the notion that jivas have "minute independence", there still remained the ability to become frustrated and overcome with anxiety. When being controlled to experience the following BBT translations, one can be brought under the notion of thinking one has the ability to, and needs to control the mind in a certain way for attainment of self-realization.

You then quoted a bunch of verses from Prabhupada's *Gita* translation, chapter 6, where Krishna talks about the need to focus or control the mind in various ways.

Those verses showcase the point you made about how context, for people on varying levels of God consciousness, is important to understand what and why shastra is teaching what it's teaching. Those translations you quoted are more or less what Krishna says, they aren't perfect translations but they get the job done. Why is Krishna saying that the yogi needs to control the mind if we have no ability to do so? Is Krishna speaking the whole truth? It's more of a relative than an absolute truth. Sometimes in the Gita there is relative truth, sometimes absolute truth, that's the progressive nature of the Gita. It presents an evolutionary path of spiritual practice and teaching.

As you advance, your ability to understand more and complex truth increases, so shastra provides a more advanced teaching for you. It's the nature of Vedic spiritual teachings in general to sometimes speak lesser truths or relative truths to progressively lead someone to the higher or absolute truth. The 6th chapter of the Gita is a perfect example. Krishna is talking about learning how to detach the self from the mind in meditation, but because until you are advanced in spiritual understanding you will

identify with the mind as yourself or under your control, Krishna tailors those instructions on learning how to detach the self from identifying with the mind, by using a concept you believe to be true — that you can control your mind.

> BG 6.26: From wherever the mind wanders due to its flickering and unsteady nature, one must certainly withdraw it and bring it back under the control of the self.

Because people are so conditioned from birth to identify with the mind, they need to gradually learn how to detach themselves from that to be self-realized and God conscious. One way to do that is by telling them to try to control the mind, to steady it, to try to focus it on silence. What this type of teaching is doing is helping people to detach from identifying with the mind, to see it as different from themselves, as something to observe, which is the real purpose of these teachings.

Krishna is always speaking in ways which have more than one interpretation for teaching people on different levels of spiritual understanding. For example:

> BG 6.25: Gradually, step by step, one should become situated in trance by means of intelligence sustained by full conviction, and thus the mind should be fixed on the self alone and should think of nothing else.

What does this mean?

It’s telling us that by our intellect, our understanding, we should be aware of our self as different from the mind by training the mind on the self, to focus our awareness of ourselves as the consciousness, and think of nothing else, i.e. try to be silent and observe yourself as purely the conscious observer, the self experiencing the mind and the body.

It’s also saying something else. The absolute truth is we can’t control the mind, it simply isn’t within our power, it isn’t under our control and never will be. In the 18th chapter Krishna tells Arjuna that it was *ahankara*, the

false ego or wrong conception of ones identity, that was the cause of Arjuna thinking he wasn't going to fight. Krishna tells him that he was delusional to think he could do as he wanted, that in fact Arjuna was bound by the nature of his birth as a human, that he has no independence, because Krishna, being situated within him, is the controller of everybody's actions.

yad ahankaram asritya / na yotsya iti manyase
mithyaiva vyavasayas te / prakritis tvam
niyokshyati

You were thinking that you will not fight, *na yotsya iti manyase*. But that is due to your misconception of your self and reality, *yad ahankaram asritya* . That resolution was in vain, *mithyaiva vyavasayas te*, prakriti (Krishna's universal nature) will engage you (make you fight), *prakritis tvam niyokshyati*.

svabhava-jena kaunteya / nibaddhah svena karmana
karttum necchasi yan mohat / karishyasy avaso 'pi tat

Your desire is illusory, *karttum necchasi yan mohat*. Bound by actions, *nibaddhah svena karmana*, born of your nature son of Kunti, *svabhava-jena kaunteya*, helpless, you will act *karishyasy avaso 'pi tat*.

isvarah sarva-bhutanam / hrid-dese 'rjuna tishthati
bhramayan sarva-bhutani / yantrarudhani mayaya

The supreme controller is at the heart of all beings Arjuna, *isvarah sarva-bhutanam hrid-dese 'rjuna tishthati*, motivating the movements of all living beings,

> *bhramayan sarva-bhutani*, who are mounted on the machine of his universal potency, *yantrarudhani mayaya*

How does Krishna motivate our movements? Through control of the mind and body. The mind is always under Krishna's control, so is the body. Knowing this higher truth, this verse can have another meaning:

> BG 6.25: Gradually, step by step, one should become situated in trance by means of intelligence sustained by full conviction, and thus the mind should be fixed on the self alone and should think of nothing else.

We can also understand being "fixed or trained on the self" in another way besides seeing ourselves as the detached conscious observer who tries to detach from the meanderings of the mind. Atman, or self, in Sanskrit, can also refer to God or Param-Atman, the supreme Self. Using that translation of *atman*, we are being told that the mind should be fixed on God within, and nothing else. Using the other translation, it says we should detach ourselves from the mind, to try to be silent. Putting them together — by using our intelligence we should detach from seeing ourselves as the mind or in control of the mind, focus on seeing ourselves as silent while seeing the mind as the inner manifestation of the highest supreme Self, *antaryami*, or God within. In fact that is what Krishna says a bit earlier in that chapter:

> BG 6.7: For one who has conquered the mind, the Supersoul is already reached, for he has attained tranquillity. To such a man happiness and distress, heat and cold, honor and dishonor are all the same.

And a few verses later in the chapter:

> BG 6.27: The yogī whose mind is fixed on Me verily attains the highest perfection of transcendental happiness. He is beyond the mode of passion, he realizes his qualitative identity with the Supreme, and thus he is freed from all reactions to past deeds.

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Time will tell

This is a reply to sinuskurve's comment to the The Idiot Contest post, he first quotes me:

> **Vrajabhumi**: What is the purpose of basing your religion around the idea that Prabhupada was a god-like Jesus figure, constantly teaching that Prabhupada's teachings were and are the one and only perfect source of information for the "next 10,000 years", and yet if you are embarrassed and or disagree with anything he taught, you pretend he didn't say them and pretend that you are following his teachings when you are in fact going against them?
>
> **sinuskurve**: This is called Argument from authority, also known as argumentum ad verecundiam (Latin: argument to respect), argumentum ad potentiam (Latin: argument to power), or ipse dixit (Latin: he himself said it) and they IMHO use it to stay themselves in power, because, hey, nobody likes to give up power and Prabhupada is all they have.
>
> Maybe I am going too far but I think you may envisage something like 'Protestant Vaishnavism' in which practitioners will rely on scriptures alone and reject appeal to authority. I do not think this works with a religion that nevertheless requires approaching a guru.

> Bhagavad-Gita 4.34 states: Acquire this transcendental knowledge from a Self-realized person by humble reverence, by sincere inquiry, and by service. The problem is that there is no litmus test who is self-realized and who not, and abuse will go on as long “enlightenment” is distributed due to the merits and long-time membership in a religious institution rather than the state of mind. Ask a Catholic whether they need the Pope.
>
> Arguments to authority may be false because the truth of the claim has nothing to do with the person of the claimant but I suppose many people defend the “Holy Father” without agreeing 100% with him, because he provides an identification figure. Groups putting obedience to a guru above personal conscience just work that way, and ISKCON is just one long exercise in appeal to authority.

I basically agree with what you wrote. Although one thing I would disagree with is the idea that the guru is required according to Krishna or shastra. I’ve written many posts explaining how the context of that teaching is important to understand to understand the purpose if it. Those are ancient teachings, taught long before the printing press, what to speak of modern technology.

Why are gurus spoken of as so essential in shastra and from past acharyas? Do you need a guru if what the guru teaches is no different from what you can read in shastra? If yes, why? Their are various reasons given that I have heard from various people when I raise that question.

They say: “If you don’t understand the shastra the guru can explain,” or they say: “You need to serve a guru in order to get his mercy, without which you cannot spiritually advance very far,” or they say: “You need a direct connection to the parampara in order for your mantras and “devotional service” to be truly connected with Krishna, without which

they have little potency.”

Those are the most oft heard justifications for the necessity of a guru if you have access to the same teachings without resorting to a guru. None of them are based on shastra, they are all made up. The truth is that gurus were considered essential in ancient India simply because books were extremely rare before the printing press. Books had to be hand copied, which took a lot of time, and therefore there weren’t very many of them. The tradition was mostly an oral one, which was dependent on brahminical training in order for qualified gurus to exist and for the tradition to stay alive.

That was why in the shastras gurus are constantly spoken of as indispensable — they were the keepers of the Vedanta tradition for Vedic society. Gurus were people who learned the teachings of shastra and then taught it to others. Since most people had little to no access to books, they were dependent on those few who learned that knowledge well enough to teach it in depth.

Imagine if in schools today there were only a few books per school, and most people couldn’t read the language they were written in, how would anyone learn? The students would be dependent for learning on those few people who somehow or other were able to find and learn the knowledge in books which contained information on how to keep everything going, or from people who were able to memorize the oral tradition. Those teachers would be the most important people in society.

So it was in the ancient world. That is why shastra stresses the importance of gurus, they were the only source of Vedanta for most people. Therefore they are spoken of as manifestations of God, but not because they were Godlike, it was simply because they were rare manifestations of knowledge from God.

Service to the guru was also stressed. But not because of the reasons believed by so many people today due to exploitative teachings. Nowadays bogus gurus teach that there is some mystic gain from serving

a guru, that unless you please a guru God will not be pleased with you, as if God is looking to see if you are willing to submit before helping you. Would a good parent demand servile submission and for their children to please them before agreeing to take care of them? No, the parent does it out of obligation, love and kindness.

The reason service to the guru was stressed was simply because in order for someone to become a qualified guru they would need to sacrifice their life to learning. It's not like today where everyone would have easy access to countless sources of Vedic literature. They couldn't just easily look up anything they needed or wanted to learn. They needed to make a great effort to learn the Vedic literature. They couldn't do it in their spare time. Plus, they were so rare and valuable, after all how many people will dedicate their lives to memorizing scriptures, and of those how many can actually succeed? So, they needed support from the rest of society. That is why service to gurus was also stressed along with importance to find a guru. They weren't obligated to teach any more than modern day teachers are obligated to teach for free.

Being a guru was a job which required a brahminical person, that's why brahmins are glorified in shastra. It wasn't how Prabhupada taught — that you could transform ordinary people into brahmins by having them give up certain activities and engage in others. That isn't what shastra teaches. Just because shastra teaches that your varna isn't supposed to be based on parental lineage, like the misguided caste system of today, that doesn't mean that you can simply choose to be a brahmin, or that you can easily transform into a brahmin. A brahmin isn't a job, it's a personality type — an intellectual. You can't become an intellectual, you're either born that way or not. That's the whole point of the teaching on varnas — you should do what comes naturally to be happy in life. Otherwise you will be stressed out and unhappy.

You may be more educated than an intellectual person dependent on circumstances and not be that type of person, e.g. a sudra, or common worker, may be vastly more educated than a brahmin, especially in today's world because of the ease of learning and the demands of modern

economies, i.e. a brahminical person may be born poor and not have the opportunity to spend time learning, while a sudra may be born rich and therefore get a much better education. In the ancient world bona fide gurus were usually brahmins. This was simply because it was so intellectually difficult to learn and then teach Vedic literature when so much was dependent on memorization and teaching ability.

Nowadays that isn't so. That's why brahmins were spoken of so highly in shastra, they were needed as gurus for society because not just anyone could learn the Vedic literature well enough to become a qualified guru. It was too difficult for the average person. Just like today not just anyone can be a stage actor, most people can't memorize a whole play and then act it out on stage well enough to make a living. Anyone can be an actor on screen because they can read the lines, or have them spoken to them, or by any number of ways and not have to memorize the entire script.

Like the first video ever on MTV says — "Video Killed the Radio Star." So to times have changed for the Vedic tradition. Society is not dependent on gurus for Vedic knowledge any more than we need a radio or go to a concert to hear or see a band. Technology has changed the paradigm. What was the main job of the guru? To learn the Vedic literature well enough to teach to others. What happens when those same Vedic literatures are easily available for the masses? The guru is no longer indispensable. The only indispensable people are translators. If I can translate some *samhita* I can then easily put it on the Internet, and then it is instantly available with ease for the world, and it isn't going to be lost. The only thing in the way of accessing that knowledge is either poverty or not knowing it's importance.

This is rather obvious information, at least I think it is. But because the Vedic tradition on the importance of the guru went on for so long, people who are interested in exploitation of that paradigm don't want to tell the truth. And if they don't know the truth, they will fight against it when they are told. Being a guru or connected to a guru can be very lucrative in today's world. Instead of weaning people off of gurus, the exploitative gurus go in the opposite direction, they stress gurus and service to the

guru.

So, buyer beware. Those gurus who stress the importance of serving a guru, in today's world, as a necessity for enlightenment or spiritual advancement, are misleading you — either knowingly, or unknowingly due to having been taught that way.

What ISKCON needs to do is get away from the guru obsession they promote, especially when it comes to Prabhupada. Gurus who are presented as the highest of the high, like they present Prabhupada, when they have said so many things which will be scorned by so many, can only damage the reputation of your organization, and therefore the purpose of your mission. Sentimental flag-waving in support of a specific person as your purest representative, isn't helping to represent the teachings of Mahaprabhu if that person is seen as grossly offensive and foolish by most people.

ISKCON leaders need to wake up and see the problem instead of making it worse and worse. They are investing more and more in the Prabhupada-as-divine-savior-Jesus-figure mythology, and the longer they do that the more difficult it will be to change course. How long do they think it will be before Prabhupada's offensive and foolish statements are splashed across countless newspapers and websites if ISKCON ever becomes anything more than a negligible curiosity to most people? What then? Do you even care beyond the fringe benefits you receive from being a leader in ISKCON? Why do I get the feeling that too many of them see their lives as a lucky break, where for practically doing nothing they are treated so nicely and live lavishly, supported by the work of others? So much so that they fear to rock the boat so they don't lose the perks of ISKCON leadership.

These guys are not worthy of your devotion, alls I'm saying. Maybe if they did the right thing and spoke the truth rather than a fiction for their own comfort, then maybe they would be, to a degree.

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Reflections on Aindra Dasa' book

A large percentage of people who have received their understanding of Gaudiya Vaisnavism solely from ISKCON end up giving up on Gaudiya Vaisnavism after not advancing to the promised more blissful evolved states, and also not seeing it in others. They end up feeling the process is not all it's cracked up to be, to one degree or another.

The central theme of Aindra Dasa's book is that the sole purpose of Gaudiya Vaisnavism is being neglected in ISKCON, and the larger Gaudiya community connected with it. Rather than focusing on internal self-realization — i.e. developing our understanding and realization of our innate intimate eternal relationship with God, instead, he claims most everyone is focused on the external world in their bhakti practice; on everything but following the traditional methodology for developing real actual self-realization and intimacy in your relationship with Radha Krishna. Aindra laments the lack of raganuga-bhakti, which the title of his book alludes to as "the heart" of "transcendental book distribution." At the end of his book he writes:

> Without pretence, I beg my esteemed readers to mercifully bless me with even so much as a (vraja-dhuli) dust particle of raga-mayi loving service to the Holy Name, which ever-exaltedly reigns as the very heart of transcendental book distribution.
>
> May the broad-minded, forward-thinking souls evermore respect these deliberations, which are replete

> with profound concerns for advancing a more progressive culture of antaranga-bhakti in the lives of Your seriously dedicated sankirtana devotees. Please let those essence seeking, deeply introspective, softhearted individuals who patiently and sincerely read or hear these verbose utterances very soon attain the highest transcendental happiness (paramananda) in the spontaneous loving service of Your lotus feet according to their innermost heart's aspirations.

Raga-mayi is another way of saying raganuga, as is antaranga (internal) bhakti.

Why is there not only a lack of raganuga-bhakti but even a disdain for it in ISKCON, and with so many connected to it? I believe it's because the original teachings on the importance of and qualification for the progression from vaidhi to raganuga were changed by Prabhupada to accomodate his vision for ISKCON. It seems he feared raganuga-bhakti would cause people to spend less time preaching and distributing books; building temples; and increasing the scope and influence of ISKCON. How do we know this? Because he said so.

In 1976 Prabhupada was informed that there were groups of devotees in a few ISKCON temples who were having private readings of Caitanya Caritamrta, specifically the parts that have to do with raganuga-bhakti and lila theology, such as:

http://vedabase.net/cc/madhya/8/en

http://vedabase.net/cc/adi/4/en

Why were they doing that? Because the Caitanya Caritamrta had just been published, and the teachings in that book gave a more detailed and deeper exposition into the more esoteric aspects of Gaudiya Vaishnava theology than what the BBT had published previously.

So what happened in 1976 is that many devotees wanted to discuss

something new and interesting to them — the theology found in Sri Caitanya Caritamrta. Due to the prompting of various individuals, groups of ISKCON devotees were holding regular meetings where they would read and discuss more esoteric theology than what is regularly heard in official ISKCON classes. That is what Gaudiya Vaishnava teachings advise people to do — seek the association of bhaktas so that you can discuss Krishna-katha:

> Bhagavad Gita 10.9
>
> mac-citta mad-gata-prana bodhayantah parasparam
> kathayantas ca mam nityam tusyanti ca ramanti ca
>
> With their mind and their life absorbed in Me,
> enlightening each other and ever speaking of Me, they
> are satisfied and delighted.

Well, word reached Prabhupada about what was going on, and he got very upset — What was his reasoning? He said:

"Then everything will be finished. Preaching will be finished. In this sahajiyā party, then preaching will be finished. Siddha-praṇālī."

What they were doing had nothing to do with siddha-pranali, but Prabhupada clearly feared that discussing the more esoteric parts of his books would lead to an interest in siddha-pranali, resulting in devotees giving less time and energy to serving ISKCON.

The siddha-pranali process teaches that on the path of raganuga bhakti you are introduced into your siddha or perfected eternal bhava, or relationship in Krishna lila, through a diksa ritual where a guru would give you entrance into that reality as a specific character. At the same time also revealing his own character and that of his antecedents, i.e the previous line of siddhas or siddha-pranali, whom you would serve with eternally. Without that diksa connection, they argue, you cannot attain prema because it is through that ritual whereon you enter into lila.

They misunderstood what that teaching was originally about. Originally the guru would tell you to meditate on yourself being similar to a certain parishad (associate) in lila as a meditation tool, not as an actual literal revelation of who or what your eternal position is in Krishna lila. You were meant to see yourself in relation to Radha Krishna in a way similar to the examples in lila, they were to be used as archetypes for developing your own bhava (relationship). The guru would study you and discuss with you what appeared to be your natural inclination towards a type of bhava, e.g. as a lover; then the guru would advise you to meditate on seeing yourself internally as that person while trying to relate to Radha Krishna (internally, through the mind's connection to Paramatma).

It was simply a meditation tool, not an actual revelation of your eternal identity in lila. But that was corrupted by unscrupulous people so that they could become the gatekeepers of the spiritual world without whom you cannot attain eternal perfection. As is so often the case in the history of gurus, guru-tattva was twisted to exploit people, to convince people that they are absolutely dependent on the mystical mercy or mystic benediction of a specific guru — which you can only receive by being initiated by him, and then surrendering everything to and serving him.

The Bhagavatam and countless other shastra never teaches that self-realization is dependent on diksa, certainly not on an unbroken parampara or a single ritual. They teach that diksa is certainly wanted and helpful and stress it strongly, but that was because in that culture and time where they were without modern technology giving widespread ease of access to countless shastras and the teachings of countless sadhus, like our situation, the diksa connection created a bond with a guru — whom you were dependent on for spiritual education. Diksa was strongly stressed so that you would become bonded with the person whom you needed to gain siksa from. Service to the guru was also strongly stressed as payment to the guru, reciprocating with the teacher for giving you his time and energy. Without serving the guru, the guru had no obligation to teach you, so service to the guru was also strongly stressed in shastra in order to gain enlightenment. It's no different than in modern times the stressing of a college education to be materially successful. But to gain that education

you have to give service (money) to the college.

Diksa was for the purpose of gaining siksa, not that diksa is a magical rite where enlightenment is transferred to you by the ritual itself. Shaktipat is taught in some Shaivite traditions — that is where the guru magically gives enlightenment or some siddhi to a person through initiation or some ritual, or even simply by a look or a touch. But that is not taught in Vedanta or any Vaisnava tradition as a bona fide method of attaining enlightenment. It's always siksa, spiritual knowledge, which is stressed as all-important, not any ritual. Rituals are aids to siksa, not equal to or greater.

Visvanath Chakravarti Thakura writes in his Raga Vartma Chandrika:

> When the eye is smeared with medicinal ointment, it's ability of reception becomes more and more refined, and accordingly it is able to perceive more and more subtle objects; similarly according to the degree of the mind's having become purified by hearing and chanting of My purifying pastimes, all the subtle truths of reality become manifest in the heart of the sadhaka.
>
> Uddhava says in Srimad Bhagavatam 11.29.6: Krishna reveals Himself through the acarya or through the agency of the caitya guru. Thus some devotee attains knowledge about the moods of Krishna and His Vraja associates from the mouth of a guru, some from the mouth of a learned raganuga devotee, and some, whose hearts have been purified by the practise of bhakti, will have this knowledge directly revealed to them from within their hearts.

The people who promote diksa and siddha-pranali as absolutely required are in contradiction with the Bhagavatam. Also with what Mahaprabhu teaches in Caitanya Caritamrta:

> diksa-purascarya-vidhi apeksa na karejihva-sparse a-candala sabare uddhare

> One does not have to undergo initiation or execute the activities required before initiation. One simply has to vibrate the holy name with his lips. Thus even a man in the lowest class [candala] can be delivered.

What was Prabhupada so upset about? After all, they weren't reading books which were describing erotic rasa lila, like some of the works of Rupa Goswami or Krishnadas Kaviraja and others — they were only reading Prabhupada's books! Here is Tamal Krishna Goswami telling the tale:

> **The Gopi-bhava Club Heresy**
>
> While negative views of mundane sexuality thread their way through much of the scripture, the same literature (paradoxically, some would say) reverences conjugal love as the highest devotion to God. That ISKCON faced a heresy involving gopi-bhava (the loving mood of the gopis) is not surprising, nor was it the first time the Gaudiya line had to resolve such a contentious issue. The culmination of Vaishnava religious practice is the attainment of flawless love for the Deity. For Gaudiya Vaishnavas, the love of the gopis, Krishna's cowherd lovers, is considered most consummate. But ever since Shi Chaitanya established the primacy of parakiya-bhava (love out of wedlock), there has been no dearth of questions involving morality and practice. Perhaps no other tradition explores in such vivid detail the possibilities of the conjugal relationship between the devotee and the Godhead. Considering the extensive textual tradition devoted to this subject, the reserve most practitioners display for such topics is impressive. **The texts warn that highly advanced devotees can only understand Krishna's conjugal pastimes; premature attempts to enter such esoteric topics will end in mundane lust-the opposite of spiritual**

> **love. Most advanced devotees are understandably cautious, considering themselves unqualified.** It is neither practical nor theologically correct to expect everyone to be able to rise to the exalted level of the gopis' love. Other relationships with Krishna-parental, fraternal, and servile love-are equally desirable. In fact, each soul is said constitutionally to have an eternal relationship with the Godhead, and realisation of that relationship is more a matter of acceptance than selection. In any case, attainment of perfect love is gradual, and it can be arduous.

He wants to make it seem like what the "Gopi-bhava club" was all about was studying the more erotic works of the 6 Goswamis and other previous acharyas. What they were doing (from reports, I wasn't there) was studying Caitanya Caritamrta. When it comes to bhava and rasa — that book is instructional, i.e. giving the process on how to attain bhava and rasa, i.e. raganuga. Of course there has to be some description of bhava and rasa between Radha and Krishna to teach about it. But it isn't at all like some of the erotic poems and plays and stories of the previous acharyas. Those are not instructional manuals on the process of raganuga, they are esoteric descriptions of lila meant for teaching about the nature of bhava and rasa as an example for developing your own bhava. Tamal Krishna was repeating the what Prabhupada had taught: that only very advanced bhaktas are qualified to study rasa-shastra, what to speak of trying to attain to your eternal bhava and rasa.

Tamal Krishna continued;

> In his discourse, Prabhupada usually spoke of bhakti generically. Yet he did not hesitate to translate Rupa Goswami's Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, a work entirely devoted to analysing devotional relationships. His seventeen-volume translation of Krishnadasa Kaviraja's Shri Chaitanya-charitamrita highlights many intimate pastimes in which Chaitanya and his companions

> became absorbed in and identified with the conjugal mood of Radha and her companions. However, Prabhupada repeatedly warned his audiences not to compare these wholly transcendental descriptions with their seemingly mundane equivalents.

I agree that transcendental bhava and rasa is not the same as mundane bhava and rasa, but Gaudiya Vaishnavism is all about trying to develop transcendental bhava and rasa. In the writings that teach that process the authors make it clear who is qualified to take up the more intimate raganuga-sadhana: anyone who eagerly wants to be in a relationship with Radha Krishna — that is the sole qualification.

We are told repeatedly by Mahaprabhu, Rupa, and others after them that raganuga-bhakti has only one qualification — wanting to be intimate with Radha Krishna. So, to claim that people who have dedicated years of their lives to bhakti-yoga, who had been doing sadhana for many hours every day, studying scriptures every day — that they are not qualified to try and be more intimate with Radha Krishna because they will become lusty? That is a totally fraudulent teaching, in fact the opposite is taught — that by hearing rasa-lila pastimes mundane lust will lessen.

The warnings against people studying or reading rasa-lila was for very beginner neophytes, not for people who had been practicing bhakti-yoga for any length of time, what to speak of having more than a year of total immersion in bhakti-yoga in an ashram. What were the warnings about? If you read those books solely as entertainment than they can incite lust, simply because on the external level they are erotic to one degree or another. You are supposed to read them as descriptions of archetypal relationships to gain inspiration from.

Secondly, taking the rasa-lila descriptions too literally is a mistake and can lead to a warped sense of lila and your place in it — Radha and Krishna and their personal expansions in lila are all the same person, all the same all-pervading lord of the universe, according to Mahaprabhu's teachings as seen in Caitanya Caritamrta. Not understanding that reality, the meaning

and purpose of rasa-lila is not properly understood.

Bhaktas learn that rasa-lila is not like a mundane romance novel at the beginning of their bhakti study, they learn that Radha and Krishna are the supreme lord of the universe, and that their pastimes presented for our study are for the purpose of developing bhava, rasa, and prema. And they should learn that Radha Krishna and their personal expansions in lila (e.g. Balarama, the main sakhis and queens of Dwaraka) are all one and the same all-pervading supreme lord.

Tamal Krishna continues:

> In spite of this, a group of his disciples – perhaps twenty-five women and an equal number of men – began meeting surreptitiously to read the portions of Chaitanya-charitamrita that describe Radha and Krishna's intimate pastimes. News of the 'Gopi-bhava Club' reached Prabhupada during his visit to Los Angeles in June of 1976. Calling the available GBC members and sannyasis, Prabhupada ordered an investigation. **He expressed grave concern that such meetings, if allowed to go unchecked, would lead to illicit activities, thus thwarting the preaching mission.**
>
> The club leaders appeared before Prabhupada explaining that they were not trying to imitate Radha and Krishna's love affairs but simply studying the descriptions to develop such desires. Prabhupada's lips quivered with anger: "First deserve, then desire! . . . So long as there is any pinch of material desire there is no question of desiring on the spiritual platform!" (dasa, H. 1992: Vol. II: 268)

In the bold above we see Tamal Krishna trying to make it seem that Prabhupada felt that those people reading what they were reading: "would

lead to illicit activities" — meaning they would end up having sex instead of becoming enlightened. Prabhupada did say that, but not at first. Prabhupada's first response was after he was told that the devotees in those groups were not "going out on sankirtan" — which by 1976 was a euphemism in ISKCON for either soliciting donations or selling books:

> Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Yes, well it's a bunch of notes they mail out on a regular basis. It's really poisonous. Pradyumna has been investigating. He got a bunch of their notes photocopied. The one thing I've noticed about the people that are involved with this, two features I particularly have noticed. One of them is that they don't go out on saṅkīrtana. Everyone I've seen...
>
> Prabhupāda: Then everything will be finished. Preaching will be finished. In this sahajiyā party, then preaching will be finished. Siddha-praṇālī.

Prabhupada didn't want his followers trying to follow the authentic path of Gaudiya Vaishnavism with it's emphasis on the importance of raganuga, i.e. trying to develop intimacy with Radha Krishna from within — because he believed his organization would suffer i.e. people would want to spend less time "out on the pick" soliciting donations: for building temples, for publishing books, and for maintenance of ISKCON members and it's leader's lifestyles.

You can see when this topic is initially brought up to Prabhupada he brings up two things — sahajiyaism and siddha-pranali. He immediately wanted to disempower anyone who believed they could advance beyond the neophyte stage. All they were doing was studying his books — and yet he claimed if they did that they were or would become sahajiyas and sex fiends.

In this conversation when this topic was first brought up to him it seems that Prabhupada didn't know what to say because they were only reading his books. On the one hand he didn't want his followers to take up

raganuga-bhakti, but on the other hand — in his books, which he said his followers need to learn, there is instruction from Mahaprabhu on the importance of raganuga. Look at how Prabhupada responds when someone tried to explain the interest in Caitanya Caritamrta:

> Rāmeśvara: Śrīla Prabhupāda, some devotees, sometimes they feel that in ISKCON we're talking so much about the business of how to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but we're not talking enough about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, kṛṣṇa-kathā, they say. So that's another reason why they want to read all these pastimes.
>
> Prabhupāda: Then let them read. What kind of kṛṣṇa-kathā ? The kṛṣṇa-kathā test is as soon as he'll get the taste, he'll lose this taste. That is the.... What is this nonsense?
>
> Rāmeśvara: Won't it purify them? That's what they say, "It will purify me."
>
> Prabhupāda: What you are purified? You have become a, what is called, putrefied, not purified.
>
> Devotees: Jaya, Prabhupāda.
>
> Rāmeśvara: You can become purified, and sometimes you can increase your...
>
> Prabhupāda: No, no. You can read. Be purified. You can read. But where is your purification?
>
> Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Putrefaction.
>
> Prabhupāda: The books are there for reading. By reading, you become purified. [break] In 1935, our Guru Mahārāja, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, he went to Rādhā-kuṇḍa for kārttika-vrata. So at that time he

> was reading Upaniṣads. So first of all, these bābājīs they were coming. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had come at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. He's giving some class. So they used to come. But as soon as they saw that he was reading Upaniṣads, they stopped coming. They saw: "They are jñānīs, they are not bhaktas. "
>
> Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: What did they want to hear? Daśama-skandha (tenth canto of the Bhagavatam)?
>
> Prabhupāda: Like that. So Prabhupāda condemned them that "They are not living in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. They're living in Naraka-kuṇḍa." I heard it, "They're living in Naraka-kuṇḍa."

What's ironic is that the very first hardback book that was profusely sold and given out to the public at large by ISKCON was *Krsna Book* — which is nothing more than the very thing that Prabhupada said was bad for beginners! *Krsna Book* of course is the tenth canto or Daśama-skandha of *Srimad Bhagavatam* in story form.

Since that time we have seen membership in Gaudiya organizations who do not disallow the discussion of more advanced topics — like Narayana Maharaja — grow and grow. While outside of India and parts of Eastern Europe, ISKCON — which discourages anything but vaidhi-bhakti — membership outside the Hindu community has become smaller and smaller.

Changes to the original teachings on the qualification for raganuga-bhakti in Prabhupada's books

In every single verse in the Caitanya Caritamrta where the qualification for raganuga bhakti is mentioned, and also in the Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu, Prabhupada changed what is actually written by inserting just a few new words, but they are very important words which completely change what is taught there, totally inhibiting devotees from thinking they are qualified for raganuga-bhakti. And every time he spoke about raganuga he did the

same thing.

The original teachings state that the only qualification for raganuga bhakti is lobha, greed or hankering or covetousness to be in a close relationship with Radha Krishna following in the moods of the characters written about in Krishna lila. If you hanker to relate to Radha Krishna in the same mood as the sakhis (girlfriends) or sakhas (boyfriends), parental figures, the Pandavas, the queens of Dwaraka, or any others, then you are qualified for raganuga bhakti. That's the sole qualification.

That is what Mahaprabhu and Rupa goswami taught; and all the previous acaryas have echoed that teaching in their own teachings — except Prabhupada. He added just a few tiny words to that teaching which radically altered it, which then convinces most of his followers to think they are never qualified. Here is the prime example, where Mahaprabhu is teaching Sanatana Goswami the process and difference of vaidhi and raganuga bhakti:

CC Madhya 22.148-149

> My dear Sanātana, I have now in detail described devotional service according to the regulative principles. Now hear from Me about spontaneous devotional service and its characteristics.
>
> The original inhabitants of Vrindāvana are attached to Krishna spontaneously in devotional service. Nothing can compare to such spontaneous devotional service, which is called rāgātmikā bhakti. When a devotee follows in the footsteps of the devotees of Vrindāvana, his devotional service is called rāgānugā bhakti.

In the purport to the above verse Prabhupada misrepresents Jiva Goswami’s teachings and also radically alters the meaning of the verse he is commenting on, he writes:

> In his Bhakti-sandarbha, Jiva Gosvami states:

> tad evam tat-tad-abhimana-laksana-bhava-visesena svabhavika-ragasya vaisistye sati tat-tad-raga-prayukta sravana-kirtana-smarana-pada-sevana-vandanatma-nivedana-praya bhaktis tesam ragatmika bhaktir ity ucyate. . . . tatas tadiyam ragam rucyanugacchanti sa raganuga.
>
> When a pure devotee follows the footsteps of a devotee in Vrndavana, he develops raganuga bhakti.

That's not the translation. It's a repetition of the last line of the verse he is commenting on, with the addition of a single word, a word which radically alters the teaching of that verse — the word is "pure". The last sentence of the verse says "When a *devotee* follows in the footsteps of the devotees of Vrindāvana, his devotional service is called rāgānugā bhakti." Prabhupada changes "devotee" to "pure devotee" in the purport. And he does it time and time again, every time he translates or comments on raganuga bhakti, he changes where it simply says "devotee" to "pure devotee" or "liberated devotee" or "self-realized devotee", or some variation of that, as I will show you. He is intimidating his followers away from thinking they are qualified for raganuga bhakti. This is the translation of that verse from Jiva Goswami which is not translated in the purport:

> yasya pUrvoktaM rAga-vizeSe rucir eva jAtAsti na tu rAga-vizeSa eva svayaM, tasya tAdRza-rAga-sudhAkara-karAbhAsa-samullasita-hRdaya-sphaTika-maNeH zAstrAdi-zrutAsu tAdRzyA rAgAtmikAyA bhakteH paripATISv api rucir jAyate | tatas tadIyaM rAgaM rucy-anugacchantI sA rAgAnugA tasyaiva pravartate || (Bhakti-sandarbha 310)
>
> When the splendour of the moonrays of raga shines on the crystal-like heart of a person in whom a taste for the aforementioned specific raga has awakened, but who himself does not possess distinct raga, his heart rejoices. He then hears from the scriptures about such

ragatmika-bhakti and consequently develops a ruci for the same. Following his ruci for such raga, he engages in raganuga-bhakti.

CC Madhya 22.150-154

When one becomes attached to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, his natural inclination to love is fully absorbed in thoughts of the Lord. That is called transcendental attachment, and devotional service according to that attachment is called rāgātmikā, or spontaneous devotional service.

The primary characteristic of spontaneous love is deep attachment for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Absorption in thought of Him is a marginal characteristic.

Thus devotional service which consists of rāga [deep attachment] is called rāgātmikā, spontaneous loving service. If a devotee covets such a position, he is considered to be most fortunate.

If one follows in the footsteps of the inhabitants of Vrindāvana out of such transcendental covetousness, he does not care for the injunctions or reasonings of śāstra. That is the way of spontaneous love.

Devotional service in spontaneous love is vividly expressed and manifested by the inhabitants of Vrindāvana. Devotional service that accords with their devotional service is called rāgānugā bhakti, or devotional service following in the wake of spontaneous loving service.

Now comes the changes from the original in the verse that follows:

tat-tad-bhāvādi-mādhuryeśrute dhīr yad apekṣatenātra
śāstraṁ na yuktiṁ catal lobhotpatti-lakṣaṇam

tat-tat — respective; bhāva-ādi-mādhurye — the sweetness of the loving moods (namely śānta-rasa, dāsya-rasa, sakhya-rasa, vātsalya-rasa and mādhurya-rasa) of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana; śrute — when heard; dhīḥ — the intelligence; yat — which; apekṣate — depends on; na — not; atra — here; śāstram — revealed scriptures; na — not; yuktim — logic and argument; ca — also; tat — that; lobha — of covetousness to follow in the footsteps; utpatti-lakṣaṇam — the symptom of awakening.

When an advanced, realized devotee hears about the affairs of the devotees of Vṛndāvana — in the mellows of śānta, dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya and mādhurya — he becomes inclined in one of these ways, and his intelligence becomes attracted. Indeed, he begins to covet that particular type of devotion. When such covetousness is awakened, one’s intelligence no longer depends on the instructions of śāstra [revealed scripture] or on logic and argument.

PURPORT

This verse is also found in the Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.292).

Prabhupada changed the original meaning of this verse by inserting the English phrase “When an advanced, realized devotee” at the beginning. It's not in the original text. This is a more correct translation of that verse:

When someone hears about the sweet relationships of the devotees of Vrndavana — he becomes inclined in

that way, and his intelligence becomes attracted. Indeed, he begins to covet that particular type of devotion. When such covetousness is awakened, one's intelligence no longer depends on the instruction of sastra, revealed scripture, logic or argument.

The changes continue with the next 3 verses:

CC Madhya 22.156-157

bāhya, antara, — ihāra dui ta' sādhana'bāhye' sādhaka-dehe kare śravaṇa-kīrtana'mane' nija-siddha-deha kariyā bhāvanarātri-dine kare vraje kṛṣṇera sevana

bāhya — externally; antara — internally; ihāra — of this spontaneous love of Godhead; dui — two; ta' — indeed; sādhana — such processes of execution; bāhye — externally; sādhaka-dehe — with the body of an advanced devotee; kare — does; śravaṇa-kīrtana — hearing and chanting; mane — the mind; nija — own; siddha-deha — eternal body or self-realized position; kariyā bhāvana — thinking of; rātri-dine — night and day; kare — executes; vraje — in Vṛndāvana; kṛṣṇera — of Lord Kṛṣṇa; sevana — service.

There are two processes by which one may execute this rāgānugā bhakti — external and internal. When self-realized, the advanced devotee externally remains like a neophyte and executes all the śāstric injunctions, especially those concerning hearing and chanting. But within his mind, in his original, purified, self-realized position, he serves Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana in his particular way. He serves Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours a day, all day and night.

The phrase: "When self-realized, the advanced devotee externally remains like a neophyte and executes all the śāstric injunctions" — is not in the

original text. Prabhupada added that to the translation of this verse and thereby changed what was actually being taught by Sri Chaitanya about raganuga-bhakti. Sadhaka-dehe just means “the body of a sadhaka” i.e. a person who does sadhana, and not: “with the body of an advanced devotee” — as is translated in the word for word, and not: “When self-realized, the advanced devotee” — as we see in the final outcome. Nowhere in the original text does it then say “remains like a neophyte and executes all the śāstric injunctions.” In fact just a few verses earlier as I quoted above, the opposite is taught – raganuga bhaktas aren’t concerned with the rules and regulations of shastra. The above verse actually says:

> [Raganuga] Sadhana should be performed both externally and internally. First, one should engage the body and external senses in the processes of sravana and kirtana (hearing and chanting). Next, internally, one should engage the mind to think of one’s own siddha-deha (spiritual body), and in that spiritual body conceived within the mind, to day and night perform seva to Krsna in Vrndavana.

Then the next verse's translation is also changed from the original. The dependence on the rules and regulations of shastra is the very definition of vaidhi-bhakti. Prabhupada changes the definition and description of raganuga-bhakti into more or less that of vaidhi-bhakti. Why? Probably to make devotees think they need to always be surrendered to ISKCON with it's rules and regulations, even if they are qualified for raganuga-bhakti and don't need to depend on the ISKCON vaidhi lifestyle:

CC Madhya 22.158

> sevā sādhaka-rūpeṇasiddha-rūpeṇa cātra hitad-bhāva-lipsunā kāryāvraja-lokānusārataḥ
>
> sevā — service; sādhaka-rūpeṇa — with the external body as a devotee practicing regulative devotional service; siddha-rūpeṇa — with a body suitable for

eternal, self-realized service; ca — also; atra — in this connection; hi — certainly; tat — of that; bhāva — the mood; lipsunā — desiring to obtain; kāryā — to be executed; vraja-loka — of a particular servant of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana; anusārataḥ — by following in the footsteps.

The advanced devotee who is inclined to spontaneous loving service should follow the activities of a particular associate of Kṛṣṇa's in Vṛndāvana. He should execute service externally as a regulative devotee as well as internally from his self-realized position. Thus he should perform devotional service both externally and internally.

There is no "advanced devotee" or "regulative" in the original verse. Sādhaka-rūpeṇa simply means: "a body of a person doing sadhana" not: "with the external body as a devotee practicing regulative devotional service." Nor is the phrase: "self-realized position" in the actual verse. Sadhana is of two types in bhakti-yoga, vaidhi-sadhana and raganuga-sadhana. What the verse says is that the raganuga-bhakta should practice two types of activities — sadhana done with the body, e.g. sravanam, kirtanam — which is part of raganuga-sadhana; as well as internal meditation on the siddha-rūpeṇa — the perfected form you concieve of yourself as in your eternal bhava (relationship) with Radha Krishna in lila.

Instead of the teaching on raganuga being solely about developing an intimate relationship with Radha Krishna from within as friend or lover, he mistranslated some verses to make it seem like it was really all about "service and surrender." For example:

CC Madhya 8.220

sei gopī-bhāvāmṛte yāṅra lobha hayaveda-dharma-loka tyaji' se kṛṣṇe bhajaya

sei — that; gopī — of the gopīs; bhāva-amṛte — in the

> nectar of the ecstasy; yāńra — whose; lobha — attachment; haya — is; veda-dharma — religious principles of the Vedas; loka — popular opinion; tyaji’ — giving up; se — he; kṛṣṇe — unto Kṛṣṇa; bhajaya — renders loving service.
>
> One who is attracted by that ecstatic love of the gopīs does not care about popular opinion or the regulative principles of Vedic life. Rather, he completely surrenders unto Kṛṣṇa and renders service unto Him.

The verse actually says:

> One who has a strong desire or who is greedy (lobha) for the immortal nectar of the bhava of the gopis, worships me renouncing scriptural and societal rules and regulations (veda-dharma-loka).

The verse is about inner development of bhava and rasa. The word bhajan is an interesting word that is usually translated as worship, here Prabhupada translates bhajaya as “completely surrenders unto Kṛṣṇa and renders service unto Him”. His intent is to make it seem like the verse is about submissive physical service. The root bhaj means different things other than worship:

"sharing or participating in , entitled to , possessing , enjoying , perceiving , feeling"

Bhajan isn’t about worship in the sense of worshiping a deity or a being you submit to in a submissive posture, it’s about entering into and participating and enjoying a shared relationship. Worship in the sense of “He worships her every move while making love”. It’s about development of intimate bhava and rasa. Whereas Prabhupada makes it about surrender and service of the bhakta to God, where instead it’s supposed to be about a shared intimacy between friends and lovers.

A few verses later there is more change from the original:

> vraja-lokera kona bhāva lañā yei bhajebhāva-yogya
> deha pāñā kṛṣṇa pāya vraje
>
> vraja-lokera — of the planet known as Goloka Vṛndāvana; kona — some; bhāva — mood; lañā — accepting; yei — anyone who; bhaje — executes devotional service; bhāva-yogya — suitable for that spiritual attraction; deha — a body; pāñā — getting; kṛṣṇa — Lord Kṛṣṇa; pāya — gets; vraje — in Vṛndāvana.
>
> In his liberated stage the devotee is attracted by one of the five humors in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. As he continues to serve the Lord in that transcendental mood, he attains a spiritual body to serve Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana.

The actual verse says nothing about having to be “In his liberated stage”. A few verses earlier in the above, Mahaprabhu gives the actual qualification for following raganuga-bhakti — lobha, or hankering to be in a relationship with Radha Krishna. Prabhupada consistently changes that teaching on the qualification for taking up raganuga-bhakti, making it seem like the authentic teachings are that only self-realized or liberated souls or "pure devotees" are qualified. When the truth is that self-realized liberated pure devotees are above any and all sadhana, raganuga-bhakti is what elevates you to that level, it's not the qualification for raganuga.

In the *Nectar of Devotion* Prabhupada writes:

> Spontaneous love of Krishna as exhibited by the Vrishnis and the denizens of Vrindavana is eternally existing in them. In the stage of devotional service where regulative principles are followed, there is no necessity of discussing this love, for it must develop of itself at a more advanced stage.

Rupa Goswami doesn’t actually say that in Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu. These are the actual verses which in chapter 16 of his *Nectar of Devotion*, are what is summarized and condensed above by Prabhupada. In doing so he removed the actual meaning of both verses and created a new meaning:

Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu verses 289 and 293

> kAma-sambandha-rUpe te prema-mAtra-svarUpake |
> nitya-siddhAzrayatayA nAtra samyag vicArite || 289 ||
>
> Since prema is the sole nature of both kama-rupa and sambandha-rupa, and since the nitya-siddhas are their abode, this is not explored further in here.
>
> vaidha-bhakty-adhikArI tu bhAvAvirbhavanAvadhi |atra
> zAstraM tathA tarkam anukUlam apekSate || 293 ||
>
> However, until bhava arises within the one eligible for vaidhi-bhakti, he remains dependent on scriptures and logical considerations.

Rupa is not saying what Prabhupada wrote, i.e.:

> In the stage of devotional service where regulative principles are followed, there is no necessity of discussing this love, for it must develop of itself at a more advanced stage

Rupa simply said that he wasn’t going to go into descriptions of prema at that place in his book because he is discussing the eligibility for raganuga bhakti. In fact Rupa Goswami wrote a lot on the bhava and rasa of prema-bhakti. He also didn’t say that vaidhi-bhaktas shouldn’t discuss bhava and rasa. Rupa simply mentions vaidhi-bhakti and states that until bhava (attachment or passion for being in a relationship with Radha Krishna) arises, you are dependent on scriptures and logical considerations for your bhakti practice. Which is what Mahaprabhu said above about the qualification for raganuga bhakti — simply the passion and hankering to be

intimate with Radha Krishna. That's it, the sole qualification.

Why should we care about raganuga? Because that is the sole purpose of vaidhi bhakti, to inspire you to really want to be with Radha Krishna intimately. If you have that desire you are qualified for raganuga-bhakti. It doesn't matter how long you have been a devotee. You pick up where you left off in your last life. Someone could be a raganuga bhakta after a few months, another person may not attain it after 50 years. Raganuga bhakti is all about intimacy, moving away from awe, reverence and worshipfulness; it is superior to vaidhi-bhakti and quickly brings you to bhava-bhakti — where Krishna reveals himself directly to you all of the time. Vaidhi-bhakti doesn't cause raganuga bhakti, it simply prepares you for raganuga. According to Visvanath Chakravarti Thakura:

> kRSNa tad bhakta kAruNya mAtra lobhaika hetukApuSTi mArgatayA kaizcid iyaM rAgAnugocyate
>
> The only causes of the appearance of sacred greed (lobha) Is the mercy of Krishna or His devotee. Therefore some call the path of raganuga bhakti also pushti marga (the path of grace).

This is how Jiva Goswami describes raganuga-bhakti in his Bhakti Sandarbha:

> In the Gautamiya Tantra it is said:
>
> For they who are always fallen in love with the lotus feet of Lord Krsna there is no japa, no Deity worship, no meditation, and no rules.
>
> When attraction (ruci) is not yet manifested even the best raganuga bhakti is considered to be mixed with vaidhi bhakti. Even a devotee who has attraction (ruci) for the Lord may, to benefit the people of the world, engage in raganuga bhakti mixed with vaidhi bhakti. Therefore, in some situations it is appropriate to

practice raganuga bhakti mixed with vaidhi bhakti.

He's saying that if raganuga-bhaktas are inspired by Krishna to teach by example how to follow vaidhi-bhakti to neophytes, then they may follow the rules and regulations now and then in order to teach by example, e.g. chanting prescribed number of japa, deity worship, etc. They don’t need to follow for themselves, it is up to what Krishna wants of them for the benefit of others. It is definitely not required for their spiritual development. Rules and regulations have the sole purpose of elevating people to raganuga. Once there they do not need to follow any rules or regulations because the rules and regulations only aid those who have not attained the stage of raganuga. Jiva Goswami then challenged what he just said and quoted numerous citations from shastra telling of the importance of following rules and regulations. Then he answers his own challenge with this:

> The Supreme Personality of Godhead declares (in Brahma-yamala, also quoted in texts 9 and 24 of this anuccheda):
>
> “The Sruti and Smrti sastras are My commands. Therefore one who disobeys the scripture disobeys Me. Such a person hates Me. He may claim to be devoted to Me, but in truth he is not.”
>
> These words do not apply to the devotees engaged in raganuga bhakti, for such devotees are already on the right path in spiritual life. Rather, this verse is addressed to they who follow the wrong paths, the paths of heretics and atheists like Buddha, Rsabhadeva, Dattatreya and others.
>
> The scriptures declare:
>
> “A heretic opposed to the religion of the Vedas may worship his own deity. However, he will go to hell until the time when the universe is destroyed by floods.”

> Even though many Vedic rules are not followed in it, raganuga bhakti is not outside the path of the Vedas. Actually raganuga bhakti is the perfection of the religion described in the Vedas and the scriptures that explain the Vedas. This is so because raganuga bhakti makes one attracted (ruci) to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the Vedas are described many heretics and atheists, such as Buddha, who are opposed to the Vedas and thus are outside the sphere of Vedic religion. For example, in Srimad Bhagavatam (1.3.24) it is said:
>
> "Then, in the beginning of Kali-yuga, the Lord will appear as Lord Buddha, the son of Anjana, in the province of Gaya, just for the purpose of deluding those who are envious of the faithful theist."
>
> Therefore raganuga bhakti is proper and correct. It is much better than vaidhi bhakti. The previously discussed rules of the scriptures are meant for [those who seek] merging into the existence of the Lord [i.e. to purify non-devotees].

On a few very rare occasions Prabhupada spoke differently about raganuga than what appears in his books; about it's actual importance in Gaudiya Vaisnavism:

From http://vanisource.org/wiki/Lecture_on_SB_1.2.33_–_Vrndavana,_November_12,_1972

> So you have to uncover. You have to discover. That discovering process is devotional service. The more you are engaged in devotional service, the more your senses become pure or uncovered. And when it is completely uncovered, without any designation, then you are capable to serve Kṛṣṇa. This is apprenticeship. Vaidhī-bhakti, that is apprenticeship. Real bhakti, parā-

bhakti, that is rāgānugā-bhakti. This rāgānugā-bhakti, we have to come after surpassing the vaidhī-bhakti. In the material world, if we do not try to make further and further progress in devotional service, if we are simply sticking to the shastric regulation process and do not try to go beyond that… Shastric process also regulation, that is required. Without shastric process you cannot go to that platform. But if we stick to the shastric process only and do not try to improve ourself… The shastric process is kaniṣṭha-adhikāra, lowest stage of devotional service.

arcāyām eva harayepūjāṁ yaḥ śraddhayehatena tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣusa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ

Generally, people come to this temple, they are very devoted to the Deity. They offer their respects, flowers and other things, make the regulative process, circumambulate. This is nice beginning, but one has to go above this. One has to know who is actually bhakta, who is ac… Na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu. One has to do good for others. That is madhyama-adhikārī. If I become satisfied only with these regulative principles for worshiping the Deity in the temple and following the regulative principle daily, but if I have no other idea, then sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ. Prākṛta means on the material platform. Such devotee can fall down at any moment, because he’s on the prākṛta stage. And prākṛta means this guṇamayī, prakṛti. It is very strong.

So any devotee can fall down if he remains prākṛta-bhakta. So he has to raise himself above this in the madhyama-adhikāra. So here it is said that sva-nirmiteṣu nirviṣṭo bhuṅkte bhūteṣu tad-guṇān. So we are not enjoying actually. We are enjoying the interaction of the three modes of material nature. And

> we are thinking... The same thing, as my Guru Mahārāja used to say, that licking up the bottle of honey. That is not real honey. You have to open the bottle of the honey and lick up the real honey, then you'll get taste. That is advancement of spiritual knowledge.

Also:

> Persons desiring to follow in the footsteps of such eternal devotees of the Lord as the Vrsnis and the Vrindavana denizens are called raganuga devotees, which means that they are trying to attain to the perfection of those devotees. These raganuga devotees don't follow the regulative principles of devotional service very strictly, but by spontaneous nature they become attracted to some of the eternal devotees such as Nanda or Yasoda, and they try to follow in their footsteps spontaneously. There is a gradual development of the ambition to become like a particular devotee, and this activity is called raganuga. (NOD, Ch. 16, p.125)

And from the purport to CC Madhya 8.221

> In all, there are sixty-four items listed for the rendering of service unto Krsna, and these are the regulative principles enjoined in the sastras and given by the spiritual master. One has to serve Krsna according to these regulative principles, but if one develops spontaneous love for Krsna as exhibited in the activities of those who live in Vrajabhumi, one attains the platform of raganuga-bhakti. One who has developed this spontaneous love is eligible for elevation to the platform enjoyed by the inhabitants of Vrajabhumi. In Vrajabhumi, there are no regulative principles set forth for Krsna's service. Rather, everything is carried out in

spontaneous, natural love for Krsna. There is no question of following the principles of the Vedic system. Such principles are followed within this material world, and as long as one is on the material platform, he has to execute them. However, spontaneous love of Krsna is transcendental. It may seem that the regulative principles are being violated, but the devotee is on the transcendental platform. Such service is called gunatita, or nirguna, for it is not contaminated by the three modes of material nature.

40

Embryonic journey

This is a response to a person who wrote me and asked how I would respond to an ISKCON devotee who was insisting that Krishna teaches that one has to become self-less and renounce all desires for sense enjoyment, otherwise you displease God and cannot spiritually advance. The person used a verse from Prabhupada's Gita to make that point:

> What is called renunciation you should know to be the same as yoga, or linking oneself with the Supreme, O son of Pandu, for one can never become a yogi unless he renounces the desire for sense gratification.

Prabhupada was pretty consistent in pushing renouncement of any desire for sense enjoyment as absolutely necessary, other gurus do so as well. They usually teach that it's the desire for enjoyment or pleasure which binds you to samsara and the bodily conception of life. That isn't quite what Krishna teaches about desire and enjoyment, it's a bit more complex. Krishna's motivation in everything is to enhance the enjoyment of pleasure (through sense enjoyment and emotional fulfillment through relationships). We are similar to Krishna in that it is natural for all sentient beings to desire enjoyment and pleasure.

The Bhagavat conception teaches that life devoid of spiritual pursuit, lived solely in the quest for enjoyment, is what binds you to ignorance and to the bodily conception of life—to suffering and samsara. The desire for enjoyment and pleasure in and of itself is natural and part of being a person – anandamayo 'bhyasat – says the Brahma Sutra, we are pleasure

seekers by our nature. What is needed for attaining the purpose of life, to fulfill that natural pleasure seeking nature, is to evolve to the state of knowledge and awareness which we were designed to achieve, whereon attaining that level of comprehension, or self-realization, we are given entrance into the world of eternal constant enjoyment as a companion of the designer and controller of all life, the universe, and everything.

Nowhere is it taught by Krishna that the desire for pleasure or enjoyment is something which needs to be renounced completely. In authentic translations it’s always taught that while we are in the evolutionary phase of the development of our self-realization we shouldn’t be swayed by desires for pleasure that distract us away from staying on the path to perfection — not that it’s wrong to desire pleasure or that we need to renounce all pleasure seeking completely and totally for life. God is not so harshly demanding. Since the end goal of God for us is to give us even more pleasure, the conception that our desire for enjoyment is a sign of spiritual weakness, or that enjoying sensual pleasure is sinful to some degree, is a false teaching.

In that verse you mention:

> yam sannyasam iti prahur
> yogam tam viddhi pandava
> na hy asannyasta-sankalpo
> yogi bhavati kascana
>
> yam–what; sannyasam–renunciation; iti–thus; prahuh–they say; yogam–linking with the Supreme; tam–that; viddhi–you must know; pandava–O son of Pandu; na–never; hi–certainly; asannyasta–without giving up; sankalpah–self-satisfaction; yogi–a mystic transcendentalist; bhavati–becomes; kascana–anyone.
>
> What is called renunciation is the same as yoga, or linking oneself with the Supreme, for no one can become a yogi unless he renounces the desire for sense

gratification.

Prabhupada translates sankalpa or sankalpo as “self-satisfaction” in the word for word, and “sense gratification” in the verse. That isn’t an unusual translation among Gita translators, but still it’s not a literal translation, it’s commentary. They usually get that wrong because the meaning of sankalpah doesn’t make sense to them in that verse, so they add something which they think will make sense.

Sankalpa is a complicated word, it means:

> **sankalpa** [sam-kalpá] m. resolve of the mind (manas), will, purpose, definite intention, determination, desire (for, to, etc., d., le., –&degree;): &degree;–, = by the mere wish, according to desire, for a particular purpose: -ga, a. ori ginating in the will, produced by the mere will; arising from interested motives; m. desire; love; -ganman, a. produced from desire; m. love, god of love; -mûla, a. based on interested motives; -yoni, a. originating in mere will; m. (produced from desire), love, god of love; -vat, a. possessing decision.

Taken literally, without the context of what Krishna is teaching, can seem contradictory to the previous sloka — that’s where Krishna says that real yogic renunciation is when you work or perform your duty independent of or regardless (anasrita) of the fruits of that work, not that renouncing all work is yogic renunciation. So in the next verse to say that real yogic renunciation also involves the need to renounce the resolve of the mind, will, purpose, and determination and desire, seems like he is saying you need to renounce everything—since how can you do anything if you have no resolve or determination or desire to do it?

Many translators and commentators resort to claiming that Krishna means sense enjoyment or “desire for the fruits of action” by sankalpa, since they can’t understand why Krishna would say you need to renounce resolve,

determination, desire. It sounds like he is contradicting the previous verse wherein he says real yogic renunciation is not simply renouncing all actions.

Krishna is making a point on the nature of karma or action in relation to self-realization—that to be in union with God, or be in sync with God, or self-realized, you need to renounce the conception of sankalpa—renounce the conception that you're in control over your resolve, your mind, your determination and desire, your will to power. Krishna spells that out a bit more literally near the end of the Gita:

> cetasa sarva-karmani / mayi sannyasya mat-parah
> buddhi-yogam upasritya / mac-cittah satatam bhava
>
> sannyasya–having renounced; sarva-karmani–all activities;
> cetasa–through your mind; mayi–unto Me; mat-parah–being
> dedicated to Me; upasritya–taking shelter; buddhi-yogam–of
> the yoga of intelligence; bhava–be; satatam–always; mat-cittah–
> in consciousness of Me.
>
> With your mind free from the false ego of being the doer, wholeheartedly offering Me all your activities, and taking shelter of resolute intelligence filled with dedication to Me, remain always absorbed in full consciousness of Me.

That translation is from Narayana Maharaja, it's more literal than Prabhupada's translation, but it doesn't give the full implication of the sloka. The first line "cetasa sarva-karmani" means "all the actions of the intelligence and mind." The next line "mayi sannyasya mat-parah" means "renounce to me as the supreme." Together it means:

Renouncing all the actions of the intelligence and mind to me as

the supreme, become always conscious of me by residing in me through buddhi-yoga (union of intellect)

Self-realization entails understanding that we are not the real doer or performer of any action, including and especially what goes on in the mind. We are not the doer because we are not in control of our mind, and therefore we are not in control of the result of any action inspired by the mind. Krishna says:

Prakrtyaiva ca karmani kriyamanani sarvasah – **All activities taking place, in all respects, are performed by prakriti** – *yah pasyati tathatmanam* – **who also sees the atma** – *akarttaram* – **is not the doer** – *sa pasyati* – **he sees**.

The atma is not the doer, prakriti is the doer. What is prakriti? Prakriti is a subtle energetic manifestation of God throughout the universe, God's self-same energy, the primal state of matter/energy. Everything is comprised of prakriti. Krishna says:

Mayadhyakshena prakritih – **Prakriti works under my supervision** – *suyate sa-caracaram* – **manifesting all created things** – *hetunanena kaunteya jagad viparivarttate* – **this is how the universe works son of Kunti**.

To be self-realized is to understand and realize that Krishna as paramatma is in complete control over your destiny because your mind is not under your control, and therefore your resolve, determination and desire, which moves your body, is not under your control. Therefore a self-realized person renounces the conception that you can affect any outcome of any action you perform.

That's why Krishna then says that we need to see God in everyone, not in some sentimental way, but literally. Since God has total control over everything anyone thinks or does, everything is a literal manifestation of Krishna.

Once renouncing the conception of sankalpa, or the conception that you control the mind, you can be in union with God at all times through the mind. That's because you'll understand that God is manifesting and controlling what goes on in the mind, as well as everything everyone is doing at all times. God uses your understanding of that truth to communicate to you through that control, communicating through everything you experience, including through control of your thoughts, intuition and mind. Attaining that level of awareness is true self-realization.

In the Bhagavatam Krishna says:

> Within this world, whatever is perceived by the mind, speech, eyes or other senses is Me alone and nothing besides Me. All of you please understand this by a straightforward analysis of the facts.
>
> The Supersoul alone is the ultimate controller and creator of this world, and thus He alone is also the created. Similarly, the Soul of all existence Himself both maintains and is maintained, withdraws and is withdrawn. No other entity can be properly ascertained as separate from Him, the Supreme Soul, who nonetheless is distinct from everything and everyone else. The appearance of the threefold material nature, which is perceived within Him, has no actual basis. Rather, you should understand that this material nature, composed of the three modes, is simply the product of His illusory potency.
>
> My dear Uddhava, the Supreme Lord gives life to every living being and is situated within the heart along with the life air and primal sound vibration. The Lord can be perceived in His subtle form within the heart by one's mind, since the Lord controls the minds of everyone, even great demigods like Lord Siva. The Supreme Lord

also assumes a gross form as the various sounds of the Vedas, composed of short and long vowels and consonants of different intonations.

≋

41

Women -- sort yourself out

Servant of Krishna wrote in a few comments to Store Keeper:

> Store Keeper: I vividly recall reading this statement years ago and it was so incredibly disturbing to me that it was literally branded into my consciousness.
>
> Trying to find the reference now I Googled it, and here is a quote from SB 9.20.21:
>
> http://vedabase.net/sb/9/20/21/
>
> This might have been it, but I'm not sure.
>
> Frankly, if the Srimad Bhagavatam, allegedly the amala purana, actually states that "the mother is only a container, like the skin of a bellows," I am done with that book, too, just like I am done with ACBS, as being in any way accurately representative of God or true spirituality.
>
> Remember, though, that I not only do not accept ACBS as an authority, I no longer accept so-called "scriptures" either, which I believe, historically, have been corrupted/altered/added to/subtracted from over the centuries.

This is the verse you mention:

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 9.20.21

mātā bhastrā pituḥ putro
yena jātaḥ sa eva saḥ
bharasva putraḿ duṣmanta
māvamaḿsthāḥ śakuntalām

SYNONYMS

mātā — the mother; bhastrā — just like the skin of a bellows containing air; pituḥ — of the father; putraḥ — the son; yena — by whom; jātaḥ — one is born; saḥ — the father; eva — indeed; saḥ — the son; bharasva — just maintain; putram — your son; duṣmanta — O Mahārāja Duṣmanta; mā — do not; avamaḿsthāḥ — insult; śakuntalām — Śakuntalā.

TRANSLATION

The voice said: O Mahārāja Duṣmanta, a son actually belongs to his father, whereas the mother is only a container, like the skin of a bellows. According to Vedic injunctions, the father is born as the son. Therefore, maintain your own son and do not insult Śakuntalā.

That verse is mistranslated. *Bhastra* can mean bellows, but that’s not it’s primary meaning. And in fact bellows makes no sense in the context of the verse. Bellows are bags of air used to stoke fires. Clearly not a metaphor for a womb, which is what the word *bhastra* was being used as. Here is the meaning of *bhastra*:

1. **bhastrA** f. a leathern bottle or vessel (used for carrying or holding water) S3Br. &c. &c. ; a skin , pouch , leathern bag (cf. %{mAtrA-} and %{hema-bh-}) ; a bellows or a large hide with valves and a clay nozzle so used Ka1v. Pur. ; a partic. manner of recitation Ta1n2d2Br.

Also the Sanskrit in the verse says nothing about the son “belonging” to the father. The way Prabhupada translated that verse makes it seem that the mother is to be seen as some bag of hot air whose sole relationship to her children is as an oven, and the children solely “belong” to the father. That is not what the verse says or implies at all.

Prabhupada mistranslated the verse and then took it out of it’s context in his purport, where he again mistranslates another verse from the Upanishads and takes that out of it’s context, thereby diminishing and disrespecting mothers. He wrote in the purport:

> According to the Vedic injunction ātmā vai putra-nāmāsi, the father becomes the son. The mother is simply like a storekeeper, because the seed of the child is placed in her womb, but it is the father who is responsible for maintaining the son.

That Sanskrit line is not a “Vedic injunction,” nor is it meant to imply that a mother is “simply a storekeeper.” It’s a verse that first appears in the Brihadāranyaka Upanishad and then in a few other places including the Mahabharata. Here is the first part translated by Bhanu Swami:

> angat angat sambhavasi hrdayad abhijayate atma vai putra namasi
>
> ‘Your limbs are born from my limbs, you are born from my heart. You are named my son because you are me.”

It is clearly meant as a metaphor, and it was only relevant to that specific culture where almost always a son followed in his father’s footsteps for his occupation or varna, and also carried on the family name and inherited the father’s reputation, position in society, etc. In today’s society that type of father–son cultural relationship is sometimes seen to exist, but more often than not it isn’t. It’s anachronistic for the most part and no longer relevant because of social mobility in most parts of the world, i.e. boys are not expected to be seen or act as a continuation of their father’s legacy. In a pre-industrial society it was a good way to maintain wealth and position in

society, in today's world it's mostly seen as irrelevant and in fact is often seen as a detriment or an insult if you "get by on your father's connections or by riding his coattails."

That sloka is not meant to diminish a mother's role in her sons life, although how Prabhupada used it, it does imply that. The idea of the son born from the heart of the father, or really any child since *putra* can mean son or just child, was that semen was said to originate from the heart of the man, and therefore the child was said to be born from the heart of the father. Not heart as in the organ, but as the essence of, or inner nature of the father. What that implied was that children took on the qualities of the parents who raised them. Again, in today's world with so many other influences on children, that teaching is not really relevant for much of the world.

In this particular context in the Bhagavatam we have a disembodied voice speaking that verse to Maharaja Dushmanta (also called Dushyanta), implying God or some heavenly being speaking. That voice is trying to convince the king to accept his duty by accepting the plea of Shakuntala to live up to his duty and accept her and their son after he had convinced her to have sex with him and marry her in a Gandharva wedding, i.e. nothing official, just accepting each other; what in modern days would be seen as living together or dating, or a one night stand.

After some time, it doesn't say how long in the Bhagavatam, it could have just been one night together, the King went on his way after having sex with Shakuntala and getting her pregnant. She then had a son. After raising the son Shakuntala went to Dushmanta and appealed to him to officially accept her and his son, but he refused. So the context of the verse is a heavenly voice trying to convince the king of his duty by saying "A mother is a vessel for the son, who is an extension of you and your legacy, do your duty and don't dishonor and disrespect Shakuntala." The voice was appealing to the king's pride and honor, it's not meant as a "Vedic injunction" that teaches women are to be seen as nothing more than a womb, with no input into a child's life. When you remove the context, as Prabhupada often does, and then use those words to create or

reinforce your own views, as Prabhupada often does, the result is a distorted version of what the Vedic teachings actually were. In truth that story from the Bhagavatam is all about lila, the son of Shakuntala and Dushmanta was Bharata, who would become emperor of “the world” and because of his exploits the entire subcontinent would become known as Bharata.

We see the phenomena of contextual and translation distortion all of the time in modern Hindusim, and in Prabhupada’s teachings — which are very much affected by his Hindu upbringing. Teachings from the scriptures are mistranslated; taken out of context; and then end up being accepted as authentic Vedic teachings. The extreme patriarchal, sexist, and misogynistic aspects of modern Hinduism are directly the result of that reinforcement of mistranslation and out-of-context teaching, with often the specific intent of exploiting women. It’s been going on for so long that Hindus are convinced that sexism and misogynistic attitudes are what is taught by God in scriptures.

That type of misrepresentation was fairly common from Prabhupada whenever he spoke about women. Because of his Hindu upbringing he formed a specific vision of a woman’s place and a man’s role in society as authentic Vedic teachings. He then used that vision in mistranslations and out-of-context commentary. For example these from a previous few posts:

Srimad Bhagavatam 4.4.3

> tato vinihsvasya sati vihaya tam
> sokena roshena ca duyata hrida
> pitror agat straina-vimudha-dhir grihan
> premnatmano yo ‘rdham adat satam priyah
>
> tatah — then; vinihsvasya — breathing very heavily; sati — Sati; vihaya — leaving; tam — him (Lord Siva); sokena — by bereavement; roshena — by anger; ca — and; duyata — afflicted; hrida — with the heart; pitroh — of her father; agat — she went; straina — by her

womanly nature; vimudha — deluded; dhih — intelligence; grihan — to the house; premna — due to affection; atmanah — of his body; yah — who; ardham — half; adat — gave; satam — to the saintly; priyah — dear..

Thereafter Sati left her husband, Lord Siva, who had given her half his body due to affection. Breathing very heavily because of anger and bereavement, she went to the house of her father. This less intelligent act was due to her being a weak woman.

This part, *straina-vimudha-dhir*, translated as *this less intelligent act was due to her being a weak woman*, is wrong. The word *straina*, is translated correctly, the word *vimudha* is more or less correct, the word *dhih* appearing in the word for word from *dhir* in the verse, comes from *dhira*, meaning sober minded intelligence. The verse is saying that *Sati's clear thinking was deluded because of her feminine nature*. Not, *that she was deluded because women are less intelligent*. Sati's feminine nature made her lose her temper when her husband was greatly insulted. If a man's wife is insulted, and he then loses his temper and becomes *adhira*, loses his ability to think clearly, and acts unwisely, *vimudha*, does that mean that men are *less intelligent* than women? That's Prabhupada's and Ameyatma's logic at work.

And also

He [Praghosa Das - ACBS] also claims that if women disagree with Prabhupada that they are unfit to be married and have children and will end up alone, slaving for money and growing old without any family!

This is the kind of lunacy that can happen to devotees when they accept Prabhupada as infallible and that any disagreement with Prabhupada will cause God to punish you. Praghosa is so delusional that he doesn't stop to realize that over 99% of the women in the world do not accept Prabhupada

as authoritative. Many of them seem to be living comfortable lives with husbands and plenty of children and family support. Nor does he realize that in India where many people do have the same views as Prabhupada – women are on the average much worse off than the average women in the west or far east who do not accept Prabhupada's views on a woman's place. Where is it better to be a widow? Where are women better taken care of by society in general? The further you get away from Prabhupada's views on women in a society the better off women are in society. This is simply an indisputable fact. Women are far better off in Europe, North America, and Japan than the rest of the world. Those places are where women are least like what Prabhupada demands women to be like. The place where women are most like what Prabhupada wants – Islamic countries and India – the women there are far less protected and far more in danger than in those countries which reject Prabhupada's teachings on women the most.

Praghosa then wrote;

> Debating the veracity or relevance of Lord Krsna's referring to all of us – Kali Yuga Sudras, Women or Merchants – as "papa yoni" – Lower Born – instead of HEARING AS TOTALLY TRUE HIS most elegant and encouraging announcement – "O son of Prtha, those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birth– women, vaisyas [merchants], as well as sudras [workers]–can approach the supreme destination" is just the most obvious demonstration of the ill-effects of that sinful birth – obscuring the true point of the Lord making the statement in the first place!
>
> Anyone – woman or man – if they had ANY piety at all – would see EXACTLY what the Lord is glorifying in the above verse – the effect of devotional service and its universal availability to everyone – man – woman – child – "even a dog can take part".

Krishna isn’t referring to everyone as papa-yoni. He is saying that those of low birth — papa-yoni (outside of varnashrama); sudras; vaisyas; and women; are able to attain Him. In the next verse Krishna says: “How much (more so) for brahmanas, saintly devotees and saintly kings”. The point he is making is that anyone can attain moksa by taking up Krishna bhakti. During that time usually women, vaisyas, sudras, and those outside the varnasrama system (papa-yoni), didn’t spend the same amount of time in spiritual education and practice as did the brahmins (priestly class), kshatriyas (political and martial class), or rajarshis (saintly rulers). Women had to raise families and take care of the household, vaisyas were busy learning a trade and then working, sudras were busy learning crafts and labor and working for vaisyas or others. They didn’t have lots of time to go live in an ashram and learn scriptures or yoga for years at a stretch. The brahmins, rishis, and kshatriyas did have that time and education.

So Krishna’s point was that it doesn’t take a lot of time and energy and scholarship to attain moksa, you don’t have to go live in an ashram for years to learn the Vedas or all about yajnas, all you have to do is follow what he is speaking in the Gita. He is not saying that women; vaisyas; sudras; or those outside of varnashram; are “less intelligent”. Prabhupada claimed that everyone but male brahmins and kshatriyas are “less intelligent” and papa-yoni. Sripad Narayana Maharaja claimed that's a false teaching; he blamed the editors of Srila Prabhupada’s books for those places where it states that everyone is “less intelligent” and papa-yoni but brahmins and kshatriyas. I have shown that to be not true. Sripad Narayana Maharaja was unaware of Prabhupada saying the same things in many recorded lectures and talks.

From Narayana Maharaja's irony and ecstasy

Sridhar Swami, the famous Bhagavat commentator whom Sri Chaitanya considered to be the best interpreter, wrote this about that verse in his commentary to the Gita:

> What is there to wonder at that devotion to Me purifies one who is lax in conduct, when it liberates from

> transmigratory existence even the low-born and unqualified persons. This is being stated: Even they who are of sinful birth, of low birth, i.e., the outcastes, etc., and they who are Vaishyas, engaged merely in agriculture, etc., and women, Sudras and the rest, who are devoid of (Vedic) study, etc. – even they, taking refuge in Me, worshiping Me, verily, undoubtedly, attain the highest goal.

Visvanatha Chakravarti Thakura is considered one of the leading past Gaudiya Vaishnava authorities. In his commentary he paraphrases the verse and gives the meaning of papa-yonayah:

> “In this way, bhakti to Me does not consider the incidental discrepancies of a person who behaves improperly due to karma. What is the wonder in this? My bhakti does not consider the natural, inherent defects in those who are badly behaved because of their caste.”
>
> Antyaja, mlecchas (outcastes, non-Vedic), etc., are called papa-yonayah (those of sinful birth).

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42

Malibu Radha

In the comments to a previous post kalki das brought up the topic of archana, deity worship, and how it is taught by Prabhupada. He mentioned this verse from Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita: http://vedabase.net/cc/madhya/19/152/

Kalki pointed out how that verse is about the importance of *sravanam kirtanam* — hearing and chanting — as the process of "watering the seed of bhakti," but how in the purport Prabhupada emphasizes deity worship as all-important. I want to point out that he also goes into a long harangue about the absolute necessity of "pleasing a spiritual master and following regulative principles otherwise all of your bhakti-yoga will be without effect." Which is a bunch of nonsense, but it shows one of the reasons that Prabhupada's books are so problematic — they are geared into making you think that without joining ISKCON and following all that Prabhupada demands from the inmates of that institution — that you cannot advance in bhakti-yoga.

In a comment I replied to kalki das:

> Mahaprabhu's teachings were focused on raganuga bhakti, whereas Prabhupada's teachings were focused on vaidhi-bhakti. So it is very common for Prabhupada to write about vaidhi-bhakti while commenting in Caitanya Caritamrta even though the verses he is commenting on have nothing to do with vaidhi-bhakti.

> Deity worship or archana is one of the limbs of vaidhi-bhakti. In ISKCON because of the over emphasis on vaidhi-bhakti it is common for devotees to become overly attached to deity worship. Because they were not taught properly the tattva and purpose of deity worship, they tend to think that deity forms are like real people, except people who demand punctual service free from all so-called “contamination” or you are greatly offending them and will be punished. It’s all quite mad.
>
> Deity worship serves two purposes for neophyte bhaktas: It helps to focus your emotional feeling towards the conception that God is a person, not just a cosmic energy field; and it is supposed to aid in elevating bhaktas from the conception that God wants worship of the majestic “supreme lord” in fear and trepidation, towards a more intimate love based relationship, e.g. dressing and feeding like you would a child.
>
> But because they weren’t taught properly, it is not uncommon among ISKCON devotees to become overly attached to deities and deity worship, as if deities are real people instead of substitutes to aid in developing intimacy and bhakti. And instead of developing intimacy and moving away from deity worship, and all worship, they tend to become even more reverential and worshipful over time. They also tend to neglect trying to develop their internal relationship with God in intimacy, and instead focus their devotion on reverential worship of deity forms.

In kalki’s response one of the things he wrote was:

> [idolatry] is the danger of deity worship as you say if is

> not taught properly, but I know that Bhaktisddhanta Sarasvati (maybe the whole parampara), Advaita Acarya and even Lord Caitanya used to worship idols, for example when Lord Caitanya went to Ratha Yatra and worshiped Lord Jagannath, and Prabhupada used to say that there is no difference between the Lord and His Murti, so according to them the deity must be treated like a real person.
>
> so? if they are not kanistha bhaktas why they worship deities??

Just because someone worships a deity that doesn't mean they are necessarily kanistha or neophyte bhaktas. Deity worship is part of the vaidhi marga, it is highly recommended for those who are not on the level of raganuga bhakti. But, as Jiva Goswami writes in his *Bhakti sandarbha*:

> In the Gautamiya Tantra it is said:
>
> "For they who are always fallen in love with the lotus feet of Lord Krsna there is no japa, no Deity worship, no meditation, and no rules."
>
> When attraction (ruci) is not yet manifested even the best raganuga bhakti is considered to be mixed with vaidhi bhakti. Even a devotee who has attraction (ruci) for the Lord may, to benefit the people of the world, engage in raganuga bhakti mixed with vaidhi bhakti. Therefore, in some situations it is appropriate to practice raganuga bhakti mixed with vaidhi bhakti.

To set an example for vaidhi bhaktas a raganuga bhakta may engage in vaidhi bhakti, e.g. deity worship.

Deity worship is not supposed to be about treating deity forms as if they are literally a real person, it's for a specific purpose. Bhaktas are supposed to transcend deity worship, not become more into it. While it is taught that

a deity is non-different from who it represents, that isn’t meant to be taken literally. It is meant to inspire realization that God is in everything, and to inspire the practice of archana which will help raise the vaidhi bhakta to a level of more intimacy — if the whole process is taught properly.

But, as we can see with those who have solely or primarily gained their education in bhakti-yoga from Prabhupada, they never seem to rise above the vaidhi level. One of the symptoms of that is their over-attachment to deities and deity worship. Among the leading members of ISKCON it is quite common to see them have a large collection of shalagrama-shilas, or other similar worshipable objects. It reminds me of little girls being proud of their Barbie doll collections. They have different Barbie dolls with different accessories for any occasion which they like to show off to and play with their friends. Also they are very attached to bringing them wherever they go.

Bhaktas are actually meant to rise to the level of raganuga, where worship of any kind is given up for a more intimate rasa. But we don’t see that taught in ISKCON, and we don’t see that mentality from Prabhupada fanatics. We see the exact opposite — the longer you are in ISKCON the bigger your personal collection of deities becomes, along with more of your time spent doing archana. That seems to be the standard.

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43

Guru tattva and Narayana Maharaja

I have been having a conversation with DdB in the comments to the Happy Christmas post. After Sripad Narayana Maharaja left his body back in December of last year, I was talking with Malati about the plans of his organization for continuation of initiations. Neither of us are close to them so we were just speculating. A day ago or so, DdB chimed in with this:

> Malati and Vrajabhumi,
>
> Srila Narayana Maharaja didn't appoint an acarya, but in 2008 he told his senior sannyasis they could initiate their own disciples if they like or if they feel qualified. I don't believe anybody has yet, but time will tell.
>
> In general, he said initiating gurus should at least have rati or bhava (the sprout of prema), not just sraddha (faith), nistha (steadiness or firm faith), ruci (transcendental taste) or asakti (transcendental attachment). Prema is best.
>
> So gurus should be very advanced, and should not accept disciples simply for prestige or to make money. If they do they're sure to fall, as so many gurus have.

I responded to him with this:

It seems odd to me he would say "prema is best" or "at least bhava (rati)" simply to give someone diksa. Diksa is just a ceremony where the guru

doesn’t need to be self-realized, IMHO. Do you have any citations from NM on those ideas?

He then said he would try and find something. He came back with some quotes from Narayana Maharaja’s English translation of Bhaktivinoda Thakura’s Jaiva Dharma, the following is just the opening paragraph of his comment, you can see the whole thing here:

> Here’s some information about NM’s teachings regarding gurus, initiation, mantras, and siksa etc. The information is from Jaiva-Dharma (GVP) footnotes (pages 464 and 465) and the glossary (diksa).

This is my reply:

I doubt those are Narayana Maharaja’s words, maybe they are, maybe not. He didn’t write the book in English, it was translated into English and edited by his disciples. Even if he didn’t write that he may still have taught like that somewhere else, I don’t know. I do know that his lectures are re-written and given footnotes when transcribed by the disciples who are transcribing and editing his lectures. I imagine the same thing happens with his books.

Either way, what is written in the footnotes and glossary of *Jaiva Dharma* is typical of what you find in his English books, i.e. there is a verse from a scripture or some writing presented of a past acharya which is translated into English — but is not accurate. The usual problem I have with those translations is that instead of simple translations, they are actually interpretations posing as translations. I don’t know if they are coming from him or his editors. (I do know his editors are not exact or faithful in transcribing his lectures and books — see below).

For example: the quote you give from his book claiming to be a translation from Jiva Goswami’s Bhakti Sandarbha:

> The same thing is stated in Anuccheda 283: divyam-jnanam hy atra srimati mantre bhagavat-svarupa-jnanam tena bhagavata

sambandha-visesa-jnanam ca.

This means that when a guru who is situated on the platform of bhava gives diksa, the mantras are invested with the knowledge of Bhagavan's svarupa and knowledge of one's specific relationship with Him.

Jiva Goswami doesn't actually say that, he doesn't mention what level the guru should be on, or the word bhava, at all. He also doesn't say the mantras are invested with "the knowledge of one's specific relationship with Krishna." Jiva does say that "knowledge of Bhagavan's svarupa" is invested in the mantras.

The simple point Jiva is making is that because Vaishnava mantras have Krishna's names or Radha's names in them, therefore they reveal Bhagavan's svarupa or form, i.e. that of Krishna or Radha. Jiva doesn't say they reveal your specific relationship, he actually says:

divyaM jJAnaM yato dadyAt kuryAt pApasya saGkSayam |
tasmAd dIkSeti sA proktA dezikais tattva kovidaiH ||

ato guruM praNamyaivaM sarvasvaM vinivedya ca |
gRhNIyAd vaiSNavaM mantraM dIkSA pUrvaM vidhAnataH ||

divyaM jJAnaM hy atra zrImati mantre bhagavat-svarUpa-jJAnaM, tena bhagavatA sambandha-vizeSa-jJAnaM ca |

The teachers who are knowers of the truth say that since it gives divine knowledge and destroys sin, it is called dIksa.

Therefore, paying obeisance to the guru and giving all of oneself, one should receive vaisnava-mantra-dIksa preceded with proper procedures.

Divine knowledge means here knowledge of the true form of the Lord in the mantra and, by that, knowledge of one's own special relationship with Him.

Jiva says that diksa reveals divya-jnana — divine or transcendental knowledge. He then specifies what he means by divya-jnana: in the mantra given during diksa, the true form of the Lord is revealed. And then by that form being revealed — knowledge of your relationship with the Lord is revealed. Not that the specific knowledge of your relationship is in the mantra — it comes from knowledge of God's true form (that of Radha or Krishna).

In other words — when you understand that God is a person, living life in human form, male and female, in the highest state of existence — you will naturally understand that our own ultimate destination is to exist in a relationship with God in human form, e.g. live with Radha Krishna. That is the specific relationship that is realized. Jiva is making a point about the broad nature of that realization, i.e. realizing that the ultimate is to experience lila with God, as opposed to some impersonal samadhi or moksha — which was popularly seen as the ultimate destination for the self-realized jivan-mukta at the time of Jiva Goswami writing his books.

That is all Jiva is saying. You need to understand the purpose of those books, and therefore what Jiva is saying in them is easier to understand. He is preaching to the people in India at that time who could read Sanskrit and who weren't already bhakti-yogis, who at the time were mostly all Advaita Vedantins of various types. That was the dominant and socially prestigious philosophy of that time. Vaishnava Vedanta was popular, but mostly it was a populist movement, as opposed to the elitist Sanskritists who were dominated by the Advaita Vedanta philosophy.

Jiva Goswami was trying to convert them to Vaishnava Vedanta, to get them to accept personalism over impersonalism as the true authentic interpretation of Vedanta. Plus, that section of Bhakti Sandarbha was specifically about the need for archana (deity worship) for vaidhi-bhaktas (neophytes), and that to engage in archana you need to be initiated (diksa).

What Narayana Maharaja or his editors are doing is conflating Jiva's simple instructions about a limb of vaidhi-bhakti (regulative rule-laden worshipful

form of bhakti practice) with a more intimate teaching specific to raganuga-bhakti. He/they continue on with their interpretation based on the supposed translation of Jiva Goswami:

> Therefore, those who are desiring to attain prema-seva of Sri Krsna in Vraja in one of the four relationships of dasya, sakhya, vatsalya, or madhurya should accept diksa mantras from a guru who is established in one of these moods.

Jiva Goswami said nothing about that. What they have done is take a simple teaching, specifically about diksa being required in order to engage in deity worship, for vaidhi-bhaktas — specifically in the context of teaching non-Vaishnavas or neophytes; and somehow he/they turned that into a supposed exposition on raganuga-bhakti, and the need for a specific type of guru to reveal your specific eternal form, bhava and rasa.

Now, like I said, I doubt Narayana Maharaja actually wrote any of that. But it does sound like stuff I have read from transcriptions of his lectures, but again, that may be the fault of his editors. They have proven to me that they are not faithful to what he actually says or writes and tend to replace his words with their own beliefs now and then.

In the following I chose a random lecture on guru-tattva (teachings about gurus) by Narayana Maharaja and show the difference between what he actually says (from listening to the recording) and what is transcribed by his editors for everyone to read. The part in bold is what Narayana Maharaja actually says, the other part is what is transcribed on his website:

Don’t have any duplicity. Don’t try to hide anything from Gurudeva. Totally surrender to him. All your actions should be to please that perfect Guru.

Don’t have any (Hindi) malice (someone in audience says duplicity) duplicity. Anything, nothing, amaya niskapa, impure way, nothing hiding anything from gurudeva, totally surrendered. Always, his all action will be to please gurudeva.

The real Guru is not an ordinary human being, like so-called gurus here and there.

And gurudevas will be also standard, not like here and there.

If one opens his heart to that bona fide Guru, without hiding anything, he will then open his own heart; he will give everything to that surrendered disciple.

And then (Hindi or Sanskrit) without him hiding anything, purely. And then, what gurudeva will tell? Then he will open his heart, and give everything to them.

On the other hand, to those who try to hide something, that Guru, who has learned everything from “tricky” Krsna, will also be very “tricky.”

And those who will hide something, he’s expert, in (Hindi or Sanskrit) because gurudeva has learned everything from tricky Krsna (laughter from audience)

Sri Guru has two forms. One is God, Krsna, and one is Krsna’s devotee. Krsna is most rasika and has all other unfathomable qualities.

Then he can to see (unintelligible Indian language) atma, atma (unintelligible Indian language) means Krsna. He’s most rasik, he’s everything. (unintelligible Indian language) nothing (unintelligible Indian language) so, you should have strong belief in this things and have such kind of faith in guru.

Another example is in the English digital version of Narayana Maharaja’s Bhagavad Gita translation. What’s ironic about this translation is that there was a big stink on the web a few years ago after it came to light that Sripad Narayana Maharaja had claimed that the editors of Prabhupada’s translation of the Gita made a mistake on a specific verse. Narayana Maharaja said that devotees were complaining that the mistake was causing people to lose faith in Krishna because it seems to be a misogynist teaching. Narayana Maharaja said that the verse doesn’t say that women

are papa-yoni — low-born. He claimed that the grammar is incorrect in Prabhupada's Gita. He also said that the incorrect grammar changes the true meaning of Krishna's words and makes it appear that He is saying that women, vaisyas, and sudras are all papa-yoni. Narayana Maharaja also claimed that Prabhupada would never say such an untrue thing. In the first post on this blog — Reality Check, I proved that Prabhupada often claimed that women were papa-yoni in many of his lectures and conversations. Most likely, Prabhupada's translation in his Gita, with the grammar making it seem that Krishna is saying women are "low-born," was not a mistake by his editors but was done on purpose by Prabhupada — because that is what Prabhupada taught all of the time.

Narayana Maharaja was simply wrong in claiming that Prabhupada wouldn't say that women are papa-yoni because he didn't know that Prabhupada consistently referred to women as papa-yoni when he spoke to his followers. So you can assume that the correct translation would appear in Narayana Maharaja's Gita, yes?

No.

In his English digital translation of Bhagavad Gita, we find the same type of translation (claiming the verse is about low-born women) that he excoriated Prabupada's editors for being mistaken about, and thereby changing what Krishna is actually teaching.

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Can you answer?

Room Conversation, Sydney, 04/01/1972

Prabhupada: At once. Yes. The newspaper said that “Mr. such and such went to moon planet.” Oh, immediately believe. See? A newspaper, ten cent worth newspaper. And in the Bhagavad-gita Krishna says, yanti deva vrata devan: [Bg. 9.25] “One who can... One can go to the demigods planets by worshiping them. You can go, yanti deva vrata devan, as others. Similarly, one can come to Me by worshiping Me.” Mad yajino ‘pi yanti mam. So they never worshiped Chandra, and how they can go to the Chandra planet, or moon planet? Then Krishna is false. Krishna is imperfect. They become perfect. They are defying Krishna’s instruction. They have gone to moon planet. Then our whole propaganda, Krishna consciousness, becomes bogus. Therefore I always protest.

Sudama: They have not gone.

Prabhupada: They have not gone. We have got our tests. I am speaking from the very beginning, “They have not gone.” And practically you see, even if you have gone, what utility you have made? They are simply planning, again planning. “We shall get petrol from there. We shall have defense from there.” Simply

> bluffing, simply bluffing. The Americans will go to the moon planet to defend his country from the Russians. Just see. And we have to believe all these nonsense proposals. What defense they will do from there? Is it not the proposal? Yes.

I don't think "Krishna consciousness becomes bogus" because Prabhupada was wrong about the moon or other things. Nowhere in any Vedic scripture does it teach that you will be prevented from going to the moon or any other planet by demigods or by Krishna. Prabhupada made that up when he was preaching in the 1950s right before space travel first began, at that time there was a lot of talk of space flight in the media. When the Apollo moon project was in the news Prabhupada preached that they would be unsuccessful, that they wouldn't be allowed to go to the moon. After the moon landings he preached that it was faked. So what Prabhupada was really saying in the above conversation was that if *he* were to be seen as less than perfect for stating bogus opinions then "Krishna consciousness becomes bogus." Therefore his idea was that no matter what never contradict what Prabhupada taught — even if it is wrong. Which, ironically, is the surest way to convince people to think Krishna consciousness is bogus.

If you believe the moon landings were faked and have read some convincing reports showing all the problems which expose it as a fake, if you care, you should know that all of those "proofs of a conspiracy" have themselves been thoroughly debunked by numerous people on numerous websites. Here is one of them http://www.clavius.org/ and here is another by a Gaudiya Vaishnava http://kuruvinda.com/MoonHoax.aspx If the kuruvinda website is down, check out a very similar site at http://www.braeunig.us/space/hoax.htm, and there are many more websites that are linked to at the bottom of that page.

UPDATE September 6 2011

This video of the remains of the Apollo moon missions were just released today from Nasa, similar photos were released a few years ago, but the

lunar orbiter taking the pictures has been put on a lower orbit and therefore the pictures are much better than before. For larger images see http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/LRO/news/apollo-sites.html

And for a video see NASA | Noah Petro Explains New LRO Images of Apollo 12, 14, and 17 Sites. There are also videos from the Japanese space agency who sent a mapping satellite to the moon and created 3d maps of the surface using sophisticated computer mapping technology. That technology was a recent innovation, creating 3d maps of the moon from the vantage point of someone standing on the moon. In other words you can see what the entire moon look likes as if you're on the moon. What some people immediately did was to check pictures supposedly taken on the moon by the Apollo astronauts of specific places, and compare them with 3d images of the same places created by the Japanese mapping satellite, Third-party evidence for Apollo Moon landings.

Prabhupada would constantly berate people as fools and rascals if they didn't accept his cosmological views as absolute truth, or really, any of his views on practically anything. What's pretty funny is the way Prabhupada resorted to ridiculous arguments and nonsensical speech when disciples or reporters asked him about his views on the moon landings:

Room Conversation with Reporter, Los Angeles, 06/04/1976

> Reporter: When I interviewed you perhaps five or six years ago, it was before there were reports of the astronauts landing on the moon, and I asked you at that time if you thought, what you thought about it, and you said that, as I recall, that they would not be able to land or explore, because spirits or creatures that lived on the moon would not allow it. The reports of course said that indeed people did land and explore and return safely. I understand you have further thoughts about that (laughter) and you've even written a lot about it. I wonder if you could tell me, not at great length perhaps, but what your belief about those events is.

Prabhupada: Yes. From the…. That question I was discussing the other day. In the common sense, gross sense, that all over the world, they accept Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, in this way Saturday last. So why these arrangement? Sunday first and Monday second, and nobody could reply it. But as a layman I can conclude that Sun planet is first and the moon planet is next. So if you cannot go to the sun planet, which is ninety-three million miles away, how you can go to the moon planet within four days? Nobody could answer me. Can you answer?

Reporter: Well, I don't think it's worth the answer now, but I'm wondering what your response is.

Prabhupada: But this is the arrangement all over the world. Sunday first, Monday second, then Tuesday. So Sun, Moon, Mars, Jupiter, in this way. Last Saturn. This is the arrangement of the planets. So if this is the arrangement of the planets, moonday next to…, moon next to sun, and if you cannot go to the sun, how can you go to the moon?

Reporter: Do you, in other words, do you believe that astronauts landed somewhere?

Prabhupada: That is next question. First of all, whether you actually went to the moon, that is the first question. You have to conclude that you did not, because the sun planet is first, the moon planet is second. You cannot go to the sun planet, ninety-three millions of miles, how can you go to the moon planet?

Reporter: Well, except that…

Prabhupada: According to our sastra, the moon planet is above the sun planet, and the distance is 1,600,000

miles. So accepting that the sun is 93,000,000 miles away, then you add another 1,600,000, almost 2,000,000, it becomes 15,000,000 miles away. So if you go at the speed of 18,000 miles per hour, it takes more than 6 months. So how you go there in 4 days? And you advertise in the paper: “Now, they have reached.” After 4 days.

Ramesvara: They don’t accept that the moon is further away.

Prabhupada: They don’t accept, that is another thing, but we have got this information. How we can accept it?

Reporter: I didn’t understand that last.

Ramesvara: I said to Prabhupada that the modern man believes that the moon is closer, but Prabhupada said, “But our ancient literatures teach that the moon is further away.” So since we have that information, how can we accept the version of the modern scientists?

Reporter: Hm hm.

Ramesvara: We’ve got…

Prabhupada: Not only that. Why this arrangement that Monday and, Sunday first, Monday second?

Reporter: Well, that doesn’t necessarily speak of distance.

Prabhupada: Hm?

Reporter: It doesn’t necessarily speak of distance.

Prabhupada: That…. Distance may not be, but you have to accept the sun planet first, moon planet next.

Reporter: Er…

Prabhupada: Distance is not the question. [???]

Reporter: OK.

Prabhupada: Why this arrangement: Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday? There is some system. The system is, just like first, second, third, fourth. So it is naturally concluded the moon planet is next to the sun planet.

Reporter: Do you feel — maybe you answered this, but I didn’t understand the answer — do you feel that astronauts did land somewhere, but it was some other planet?

Prabhupada: That may be. Or it may not be also.

Tamala Krishna: What about that sometimes people ask us what about the pictures of man on the moon?

Ramesvara: They show man in a spacesuit walking on some other planet.

Prabhupada: That is also, what is called, argumentative. Somebody says it is arbitrary arrangement.

Reporter: Hm. Laboratory.

Prabhupada: Of course, we do not go into the details of this. My question is that why Sunday first and Monday second? Nobody can apli…, replies.

In this next bit we see some of Prabhupada’s disciples trying to figure out a way to present Prabhupada’s cosmology as being literally true without looking like morons. They quote from a book by someone who claimed the moon landing was a hoax (all of his arguments have been discredited).

Tamala Krishna: It says here, “There is thick dust covering and no evidence to suggest that the moon has ever supported life.” In that newspaper article the man who is exposing them said—because they say it is covered by dust — “How is it that no dust is shown on the astronauts’ suits when they walked around?” He says, “If there’s such a thick dust, then, when the rocket landed, it would have made a pocket within that dust.” He says, “But there’s no crater around the rocket. Then how it is possible that these things are like that?” ‘Cause actually they forgot. When they were making the stage setting in Arizona, they forgot these things.

Yasoda-nandana: One argument Your Divine Grace gave in 1971 was that if they went to the moon and they found it was rock, how do they explain the moon is so shiny and gives such a cooling effect? They cannot explain that.

Tamala Krishna: Look at the earth. Now, this is a real question that we still have to answer. They picture the earth round, and we say, no. Bhu-mandala is like a lotus, like this, and the earth is only one part of one island in Bhu-mandala, and it’s not, you know, it’s not round(?). It doesn’t look like that. And all the pictures they take of the earth when they go up in their satellites show round. And we’re going to tell them that it’s not. This is a very tricky question. In other words, if this is the picture of the world, like this, and we say that… If we take an airplane from here, from Los Angeles. Now, supposing we go to India, which is here. So there’s two ways to go. One way, you can go like this, and the other way, you can go like that. But if the

> earth is not a round globe, then how is it sometimes people go from Los Angeles via Hawaii to Japan and then India? So we can't figure this out. We have experience, those of us who have flown, that actually the plane went from Los Angeles to Hawaii to Tokyo to Hong Kong and then to India. So it doesn't work out in our maps so far, right? We can't figure it out. This thing has to be very complete in its answers. Otherwise everyone will laugh at us. We can't leave any loopholes.

I thought Yasoda-nandana was supposed to be a really smart guy, what happened to the magical effect of celibacy? The moon doesn't have a literal cooling effect, in fact it is just the opposite, it is colder when there is no visible moon (the cooling effect of the moon is a poetic metaphor). The moon reflects light (and therefore heat) from the sun very well because the rocks and dust on the moons surface are very reflective — which should be obvious just by looking at the moon — but was actually confirmed by examination of moon rocks and dust after they were brought back to earth — years before the above statements were made.

In this next conversation we get a bit of the "Who's on first, what's on second" routine from Prabhupada and a reporter.

Interview with LA Times Reporter About Moon Trip, Los Angeles, 12/26/1968

> Reporter: Well, what I'm getting at is that if for instance you say that first this conviction that they would not be able to land, and secondly that whatever earth people would go there would be opposed and would not be able to safely return, if you say this, based on Vedic literature, and other members of the Krishna movement heard this, and then if the feat were accomplished, would this not seem a contradiction or something that had been said would be the case and then the opposite was proved true? Would this…

Prabhupada: What is that contradiction? There is nothing contradiction. We say that if you get a suitable body you can enter there. So if by your scientific process you can equip yourself with suitable body you can enter there. Where is the contradiction?

Reporter: Well, you said that spacesuit was not a suitable…

Prabhupada: That is a fact. That is a fact. That is not suitable.

Reporter: That's the way they intend to go.

Prabhupada: That is, that is not, that we can safely say that with this suit you cannot go there. You have to make a different suit. Perhaps you do not know that.

Reporter: Okay, then let's say that if with that suit they do go there and do return, would that be a contradiction?

Prabhupada: Why contradiction? We say that if you get a suitable suit you can go there. Where is the contradiction?

Reporter: Well I thought you said the spacesuit was not suitable.

Prabhupada: Yes. Spacesuit is not suitable. But if you can go with the spacesuit that may be contradiction, but that I am certain you cannot go.

Reporter: I'm confused.

Prabhupada: I say… Just try to understand me, that if you can prepare a suitable body, you can go there. But this spacesuit is not the suitable body. Is that all right?

Now if you actually go there by this spacesuit, that will be contradiction to my statement, but I am certain you cannot do that.

Reporter: I see.

Prabhupada: Yes. So there will be no contradiction. Just clearly try to understand.

Reporter: Okay. Then I'll try to repeat what you said and see if I am correct.

Prabhupada: I'll repeat. I'll repeat. First thing is that to enter into the moon planet you have to prepare yourself for a different body. If that body, you think that it is already made by the spacesuit, spacesuit is that different body, then it will be contradiction to my statement. But I say that with the spacesuit that you have manufactured, that is not fit to enter there. Now it is clear? The spacesuit is not fit for entering there. Is that clear?

Reporter: Yes.

Prabhupada: Now if by chance with this spacesuit you enter there, that will be contradiction, that nobody can enter. But I say you can enter there with a suitable body. If you think that the spacesuit is that suitable body then you can enter there. But I think this spacesuit is not that suitable body.

Reporter: If I think the spacesuit is suitable…

Prabhupada: For entering that moon planet… That is your statement, but I say that spacesuit is not suitable for entering into the…

Reporter: If I think the spacesuit is suitable and, say, if I

am an astronaut and I land there, I can land there?

Prabhupada: If it is suitable. First thing that if it is suitable you can land. But to my opinion it is not suitable. Therefore you cannot land.

Reporter: Well… So then you are not saying then that it would be impossible for…

Prabhupada: That I never say. I say in the beginning that to enter moon planet you have to get a suitable type of body. That suitable type of body is not that spacesuit. Therefore the conclusion is that you cannot enter with this spacesuit. Is it clear?

Reporter: That part is clear, but not if other questions are asked.

In this next bit we get some interesting scientific analysis from Prabhupada.

Evening Conversation, Tehran, 08/08/1976

Prabhupada: Just like this moon excursion. Ten years ago in one small book, Easy Journey to Other Planets, we predicted that this moon-going attempt is childish and waste of time. We are not expert scientist, but from the sastra we can understand. Now such a brilliant planet, pleasing, and they have discovered there rocks and sand. Just see their intelligence. Do you think rocks and sand are so brilliant? What do you think?

This bluff is going on. People are feeling under the moonshine is so pleasing, and it is full of rocks and sand. We have to accept that. Rocks and sand, throughout the whole day by scorching heat, they also become heated. So at night it is suffering. So if it is

rocks and sand, so whole day it was heated by the sunshine, how it is pleasing?

This next conversation is ludicrously funny, I especially like how Prabhupada argues that because the earth does not shine at night — like the moon — therefore his cosmological conception is correct.

Morning Walk, Honolulu, 06/02/1975

Bali-mardana: Prabhupada, they are not going to go to Venus. The American and Russian, they are just going to meet outside the earth. They are not going to any planet.

Prabhupada: Oh, that is finished.

Bali-mardana: It is too difficult.

Ambarisa: They're going to meet in space and float around in space.

Prabhupada: That is birds are doing also. What is the credit?

Paramahamsa: They are thinking that "What is the use of going to any other planet, because there is no life on the other planets."

Prabhupada: Why no life?

Paramahamsa: Well, they have photographs and things.

Prabhupada: Photograph, what is this nonsense photograph? How long it can go up?

Ambarisa: They're taken from hundreds of miles up in space, and then they say there is no life.

Prabhupada: What is hundreds of miles? It is, er, forty

billion, what is that?

Paramahamsa: Four billion.

Prabhupada: Four billion. So how they can calculate?

Paramahamsa: If they took a photograph of the earth planet from up in space, they would probably also say there is no life.

Prabhupada: Yes.

Devotee (3): They say because the atmosphere is not like this planet, others cannot live there.

Prabhupada: Why not atmosphere? The moon planet, there is a planet. There is space. There is surface. There is dust. So why not atmosphere the same? It is made of the same ingredients, earth, water, fire. Why do you say that is not same atmosphere?

Devotee (3): They are saying that it’s too cold or too hot.

Prabhupada: That’s all right. That is here also. There are many cold places. Do they think that in the cold places there is no life? All nonsense. And only nonsense will believe them. I never believed it. Why? Here we see under this sand there is life. The crabs, what is called? They live within, so many hundreds of thousands. We have seen on the sand.

Indian man: And the polar bears for cold season for living in mounds of snows and all.

Prabhupada: There are birds, some birds.

Paramahamsa: Penguins.

Prabhupada: Yes. Penguins birds. There is life.

Bali-mardana: Seals, whales, polar bears…

Prabhupada: There is life everywhere. Bhagavad-gita says, sarva-gah. The life is there everywhere. And moon planet, according to our Vedic literature, that is one of the demigods' place. People live there daiva age, ten thousand years.

Devotee (3): They will not believe in the demigods…

Prabhupada: So I will not believe them. That's all, finished. (laughter)

Devotee (3): They cannot see them.

Prabhupada: What can you see, teeny eyes? What can you see? Can you see what is there on the other side of the sea? Then does it mean there is nothing? Your nonsense seeing. Why you are believing of seeing? Your seeing power is very, very limited. Why do you believe in seeing? That is childish, "I cannot see." What you can see? First of all, let us consider this point. You cannot see anything.

Paramahamsa: Srila Prabhupada, people will be very surprised to find out that the moon is farther away from us than the sun when they read your…, when they read Fifth Canto.

Prabhupada: But at least, they could not go there. Otherwise, why they are giving up this job? They could not go there. That's a fact. Their plan was to… They were selling land even on the moon planet.

Ambarisa: Selling land on the moon?

Prabhupada: Yes. (laughter)

Srutakirti: They were selling airline tickets also.

Prabhupada: Ah, yes. (laughter) Just see, route. Pan American, yes. They sold so many tickets. Such fools there are.

Bali-mardana: In New York sometimes people sell new immigrants the Brooklyn Bridge.

Prabhupada: And Moscow Sea. They pitched one flag in the moon planet and named Moscow Sea. Yes.

Indian man: Just like you said that this moon and other planets are also made of these five elements — earth, water, fire, ether — they brought a rock from there. So they are accepting that the moon is made of those elements also. But they are not accepting that life is there.

Prabhupada: No, they'll not accept. Therefore… therefore fools. Why? The circumstance is the same. Why there should be no life? That is foolishness. We have got experience. As soon as there is water, there is life. As soon as there is land, there is life. As soon as there is air, there is life. So where is life? No life.

Devotee (3): They may agree in undeveloped species, but as far as higher forms of life, they will not agree, such as humans or demigods.

Prabhupada: No, that also we cannot agree. If there are lower species, there must be higher species. As we see here is dog also, man also, higher species, lower species, why not there? They can talk all nonsense, but a nonsense will believe. No sane man will believe.

[break] ...going to meet in the space?

Ambarisa: Yes.

Prabhupada: What is the idea?

Ambarisa: It's a diplomatic move. They feel it will make friendly relationships between the two countries.

Indian man: They cannot meet on the earth and they are going to meet on the... (laughter) [break]

Prabhupada: So I am the only man in the world challenging that "You have not gone to the moon planet." Eh?

Harikesa: Is it possible there's some difference as to the definition of what the moon planet is? They will say that the moon planet is that planet out there. Do we agree? At night?

Prabhupada: What is your definition? First of all let me hear.

Harikesa: I'm still wondering myself.

Prabhupada: We have got our definition.

Harikesa: What do we call those planets that rotate around Jupiter and Saturn and... They will say those are also moons.

Prabhupada: Yes. Different planets, different position. Just like this sun planet is fiery. There is fire. Similarly, in moon planet there is fire, but it is surrounded by cold atmosphere. Therefore it is cooling.

Harikesa: So that's the specific characteristic of this moon?

Prabhupada: Which moon? Yes, this is…

Harikesa: Our moon.

Prabhupada: Yes.

Harikesa: So the other moons that rotate around Saturn and Jupiter…

Prabhupada: Other moon? There is no other moon.

Harikesa: So they're just planets?

Prabhupada: Yes.

Paramahamsa: The moon is not rotating around the earth. The moon is further away than the sun.

Harikesa: The moon is further away than the sun. Wow! (laughs)

Prabhupada: Yes.

Harikesa: Why does it seem like the moon is…

Prabhupada: Seen? Who has seen it? First of all let me…, who has seen it? (Devotees are laughing)

Harikesa: There's nothing you can say.

Ambarisa: Prabhupada, you said the other day that pretty soon all these lies will be exposed.

Prabhupada: They are already exposed because they have left that expedition. That means they are hopeless. That is exposed. But foolish people will not ask them that "Why you have stopped this expedition?" They will again go on bluffing, and they will accept. That is the position. Now people should ask them, "Why

you have stopped moon expedition and Venus expedition? You proposed you were going there, making arrangement. Why you have stopped?" It is failure.

Harikesa: They might argue…

Prabhupada: What is the argument? You have stopped. That is your failure, that's all. You can argue to the laymen, foolish men, but we will say you have stopped; therefore it is failure. All bogus propaganda is now stopped.

Devotee (3): They are saying the moon isn't worth develop…

Prabhupada: Now they cannot say anything because they are failure. Anything they say, that is all foolishness. They cannot say anything. Once you are failure, you have no value, anything you say.

Harikesa: I've heard the argument that when they are going to the moon, they are always in contact, bouncing off these sonar waves and radar waves off the moon's surface, and when they are coming near, they can even see from their little portholes the moon's surface, the same moon that they see on the earth.

Prabhupada: They say all nonsense. That's all. (chuckles) Why the earth is not brilliant at night like the moon?

In this next bit we see how the magical effect of celibacy on the brain has turned Hari Sauri into a genius, err, I mean fool.

Room Conversation, New Vrindaban, 07/02/1976

Pusta Krishna: Their theory is that there's a dark side of

the moon that we've never seen.

Prabhupada: Huh?

Pusta Krishna: Their theory is that there's a dark..., that actually the moon is reflecting the sun's light. So there's a dark side of the moon.

Prabhupada: So far the world is, where is the dark side and the bright side? If you compare like that, then so far this globe is concerned, which one is dark side, which one is bright side?

Hari-sauri: No, they say the earth is spinning on its own axis, so all parts of the earth at one time or another receive sunlight.

Prabhupada: The moon does not do that?

Hari-sauri: The moon does not revolve on its own axis.

Prabhupada: Another foolishness.

Pusta Krishna: Just to fit their speculation.

Prabhupada: Just see. Simply speculation and misleading people.

Hari-sauri: There's no basis for it, there's no truth to it at all. (laughs)

Prabhupada: And you people believed that? I'm surprised. (laughter) You are also fools and rascals.

Hari-sauri: This is what they teach in all the schools.

Pusta Krishna: They have little models, Srila Prabhupada, made out of plastic.

Prabhupada: Ah, they are… Let them, we take them as rascals, that's all. Mudha.

Hari-sauri: That other argument that you use about how the moon rays give life to the vegetables… So how is it that there's no life on the moon? If the rays from the moon give life, then how is it there's no life where the rays come from?

Prabhupada: They have never gone to moon. (laughs) All bogus. And this Mars expedition will be a failure. Let them spend millions of dollars. I told about moon planet ten years ago. It is childish, simply a waste of money and energy. I told this. Now it has proved.

Hari-sauri: There's no more interest in the moon at all.

Prabhupada: No? Kirtanananda said "It is inhabitable." Ten years ago I said there's no use going there. It is childish, waste of money. But who hears about us? We know moon planet is inhabited by high-class living entities. (laughs) (sarcastically:) And they will allow these rascals to go by their machine.

Hari-sauri: When they originally started sending sputniks to the moon, they couldn't even land them properly. They would crash, they said that they were crash-landing spaceships into the moon's surface.

Prabhupada: Crashed?

Hari-sauri: Crash-landing. The spaceship was supposed to just smash into the surface of the moon, like that.

Prabhupada: They have never gone. Simply propaganda. Even they have gone, what is the result? Simply with big report that it is inhabitable.

The moon does spin on it’s axis, sorry Hari Sauri. The reason we only see one side of the moon is because the moon’s rotation is in sync with it’s orbit so that we always see the same side. Another interesting fact is the reason that during a total solar eclipse the sun and moon appear to be the same size to our view from earth — therefore the moon just barely covers the sun. The reason is because the moon is 400 times smaller than the sun and 400 times closer to the earth (the moon isn’t always exactly 400 times closer to the earth because of it’s orbit, therefore sometimes there is an eclipse where the moon appears smaller than the sun and a thin ring of sunlight will be visible around
the moon. This kind of eclipse is called an annular eclipse)

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Things are not the way they used to be

Confused wrote me an email asking me to help him understand some things. Here are his questions and my answers:

> If liberation is not the final step of the spiritual process, what happens when a person dies who is liberated from death and rebirth with no further progress

Liberation is generally used in two different ways. The first way is the liberation of the Advaita Vedantists. The second is the liberation of the Vaishnava Vedantists. Sometimes you hear Vaishnavas saying that liberation is a bad thing in some way or another. In that context they are referring to the concept taught by the Advaita Vedantists of liberation as *realizing oneness with Brahman* in some mysterious way. There is another type of liberation according to the Vaishnava Vedanta, i.e. liberation from spiritual ignorance and mental conditioning with the attaining of the status of full enlightenment. The stage of jivan-mukta for a Vaishnava is the stage where the jiva has been elevated into a relationship with God, whereas jivan-mukta for the Advaitins is where the jiva realizes oneness with God.

> Does the level of a persons factual, trivial (not trivial as in not important, but trivial as in trivia-type information) matter at the moment of death? For instance, if I just have faith in Krishna's plan for me and only want to love Krishna, will that not be enough? Must I know every single detail of everything which so many people

spend so much time discussing?

Does one have to be perfect in the sense of bhakti (whatever that means) to return to Krishna at death? Do our realizations in life really dictate whether or not we can have a relationship with Him after death, or our desire to have a relationship with Him?

I read a great story the other day of about a prostitute and a Brahmin. The Brahmin (think this character as representing some people in ISKCON) spent every day reading the Gita from the front porch of his hut. That was his business. The prostitute spent every day having sex for money across the street. That was her business. As time went on the Brahmin became more and more upset over the prostitute, thinking to himself, “How can she hear me recite the Gita every day and continue her sinful activities? How wretched she is!” Then one day the Brahmin and the prostitute died at the same time. Servants from Krishna came to collect the prostitute and servants of death came for the Brahmin. The Brahmin was obviously angry and he shouted, “How is it that I am going to hell and that disgusting prostitute goes to Krishna!?” The servant of death replied, “You have spent your life living for hate. That person over there heard the Gita every day and wished only to meet Krishna one day and to stop having to live the way she was living.” It seems that it is our intentions that matter most. I was just curious about your opinion of this.

Krishna says that if you think of him at the time of death that you attain to his existence, i.e. you live with Krishna. Of course that doesn’t mean that if you don’t think of Krishna at the time of death (maybe you die in your sleep) that you won’t go to him. The Bhagavat conception is that the goal of life is to become free from aversion to God so that you can live in the spiritual world with God. The cause of samsara is our aversion to God.

Through bhakti practice a person becomes enlightened to their true self-interest. Once the jiva becomes enlightened - that enlightenment is never lost. Whatever level of enlightenment you have at the time of death will carry over to the next life.

If you want to experience a direct relationship with Krishna in this life than it would take more than just having faith and wanting to love Krishna. There are different levels of attainment in bhakti yoga. The shastra teaches us how to attain the highest level where we are given entrance into our eternal relationship with God, in this life. Mostly it has to do with understanding the knowledge of the Bhagavatam and other shastras in great depth. Through understanding that knowledge we learn how to relate with God's manifestation as antaryami or Paramatma.

> In fact, I agree very much with how you understand the Paramatma. I believe we are guided in all we do and that fighting against this is why we are born again into painful situations.

That's not quite what I believe. We can't fight against Paramatma because we have no ability to do that. I write about that at Things They Would Not Teach Me Of In College

> I believe that Krishna is so merciful that even though He gently nudges us away from pain, He also gives us what we want.

Our lives are pre-destined; our desire for this specific thing or that thing is not taken into consideration when God plans our karmic destiny. The purpose of our life is to gain appreciation for God and to lose our aversion to God. Whatever we will experience in our life has been designed by God to bring us to the goal of life.

> But it seems to me that this wanting is what is important. Thus I do see sense in some of what the Buddhists say about clinging, but not that enjoyment and clinging are the same things. Just that clinging is

> what happens when you lose the source of your enjoyment and you get all hot and bothered and throw a fit. This seems to be the “rebellion” and sense of “mineness” (that everything belongs to us and not Krishna) that keeps us from surrendering to God. That we are controllers… in fact, if we see ourselves as just “along for the ride” and enjoy it without clinging, this seems more beneficial than strict, dualistic feelings or sentiments. Just like how we throw a fit when others don’t agree with us because we’re clinging to our ego. Not that feeling good about yourself is ego, but that clinging to it seems inappropriate to the nudgings of Paramatma.

The teachings in the Gita or other shastra about trying to become free from attachments to pleasure are for the purpose of pulling away from a material understanding and goal for your life. There are different levels of teaching in shastra for people on different levels of understanding and enlightenment. For the beginner it is important to pull back from a life of the senses and focus on spiritual knowledge. For more advanced people that is not as important because they have transcended the materialistic vision of life. It’s not that sensual pleasures are inherently bad, they are God’s gift, but for a novice they serve as a major distraction. Therefore neophytes are especially advised to give up sensual pursuits as much as possible for the pursuit of spiritual knowledge and enlightenment.

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Inconceivably we're one but not the same

This is response to Confused who asked some interesting questions on the Things Are Not The Way They Used To Be post.

> It’s an interesting idea that we started our conscious existence in this world, what was our existence prior? As Krishna states in BG 2, 12: “It is not that I have never existed, nor thou nor these kings. Nor is it that we shall cease to exist in the future.” (sorry, all I have on hand at the moment is Swarupananda’s translation and there’s a lot of flowery thou’s and thine’s.) And before I reacted with the… “but, wait!” I did realize that you specifically said “conscious existence,” and now I’m curious about how that works. What the previous non-conscious existence is in the context of Krishna telling us that there was never a time when we did not exist.

Vaishnava Vedanta and Advaita Vedanta are similar in the theory of the origin of the jiva. Brahman is the source, although that is explained in different ways by different shastras and acaryas. For example sometimes you hear the jiva comes from Mahavishnu or from the Brahmajyoti or from Tatastha, etc. It all really means the same thing in essence. Essentially the jiva has always existed because it is part of God. God had no beginning because God is the primeval substance of existence. So in the sense that the jiva is part of a being that has always existed, therefore the jiva also has always existed. But the jiva did have a beginning as a separate self-aware conscious different entity from God. Sastra says the jiva in the

material world has been conditioned without beginning, using the word *anadi* which means without beginning.

Krishna says to Uddhava:

ekasyaiva mamamsasya
jivasyaiva maha-mate
bandho 'syavidyayanadir
vidyaya ca tathetarah

O most intelligent Uddhava, the living entity, called jiva, is part and parcel of Me, but due to ignorance he has been suffering in material bondage since beginningless time. By knowledge, however, he can be liberated.

The verse above is usually translated like the above, or "time immemorial" is used for *anadi* by Prabhupada. But the word *time* isn't in the Sanskrit.

Also Sri Chaitanya said:

krsna bhuli' sei jiva anadi-bahirmukha
ataeva maya tare deya samsara-duhkha

Forgetting Krsna, the living entity has been attracted by the external feature from time immemorial. Therefore the illusory energy [maya] gives him all kinds of misery in his material existence.

That's from Prabhupada's translation. *Time* is not in the Bengali verse, and *attracted by the external feature* is also not in the verse.

Adding *time* to these verses changes their meaning. They are not saying the jiva's life in material bondage is beginningless within the context of time, otherwise they would have simply added a word for time. The first verse above from the Bhagavatam says *syavidyayanadir*, which means the *avidya*, or ignorance of the jiva has no beginning. The second verse above from Chaitanya Charitamrta says *anadi-bahirmukha*, or the jiva has turned

it’s face away from Krishna without a beginning. Neither verse mentions time, but the translations I’ve seen always add the word time. That changes the context and therefore the meaning of what is being taught.

The first verse from Krishna says that the *avidya* of the jiva has no beginning, meaning that the jiva has always been ignorant. The jiva has always been ignorant because it has never been enlightened because the jiva hasn’t always been conscious of itself. The jiva is brought into consciousness at a certain point in time, and like all newborn infants it is ignorant. It then begins its journey towards enlightenment.

The second verse says that the jiva has turned its face away from or is averse to Krishna without a beginning. The jiva cannot have been always averse to God. There had to be a point where the jiva was able to be averse to God through contact with God. Logically you can’t always have had an attitude towards something, there has to be a starting point. So we can’t take that verse literally since it makes no logical sense. In this case *anadi* should be taken in the sense of a teaching technique. The verse is using *anadi* only to make a point, i.e. you have suffered a long time and will continue to suffer if you don’t take up bhakti. Sri Chaitanya is saying that the cause of the misery of samsara is because the jiva became averse to Krishna. The implication is that you can easily become free from the endless long time misery of samsara simply by not turning away from Krishna.

Confused said:

> This is my problem with this entire question of free will: the duality between “I” and Krishna that cannot but logically exist when talking about aversion (or, at least, I don’t get it yet). You wrote that “Aversion to Krishna is due to our being uncomfortable with being part of and controlled by another being,” but what is the “our”? What is the separated individual quantity capable of aversion from the totality? The jiva-soul? Yet isn’t the jiva also a part of Krishna? I just don’t understand the

origin of this aversion because I don’t recognize where the ability for aversion exists in the context of no free will and total control of Krishna.

We are not the same as Krishna. We are a part but we are also apart. Otherwise we wouldn’t exist as a conscious entity different than Krishna. There has to be an essential difference, but at the same time there is an essential non-difference. We don’t have free will because Paramatma controls our mind, and we are controlled by our mind. But we are not our mind.

Srimad Bhagavatam 3.26.28

yad vidur hy aniruddhakhyam
hrsikanam adhisvaram
saradendivara-syamam
samradhyam yogibhih sanaih

yat — which mind; viduh — is known; hi — indeed; aniruddha-akhyam — by the name Aniruddha; hrsikanam — of the senses; adhisvaram — the supreme ruler; sarada — autumnal; indivara — like a blue lotus; syamam — bluish; samradhyam — who is found; yogibhih — by the yogis; sanaih — gradually.

The mind of the living entity is known by the name of Lord Aniruddha, the supreme ruler of the senses. He possesses a bluish-black form resembling a lotus flower growing in the autumn. He is found slowly by the yogis.

Our mind is really God who rules over or controls our senses or actions. We are different than the mind and different from our senses and actions. We have the ability to experience life as separate conscious entities from God. We also have the ability to not like things or experiences in the same way that we have the ability to like or love things or experiences. Just because we don’t control the experiences we feel or see or hear, or the thoughts we hear in our head, that doesn’t change the essential nature of

our being into being non-different from Krishna. Our innate difference is that we can enjoy or dislike what God presents to our sensory, mental or emotional cognition.

Bhagavad-gita 5.13-14

> sarva-karmani manasa
> sannyasyaste sukham vasi
> nava-dvare pure dehi
> naiva kurvan na karayan
>
> sarva-karmani manasa, all activity in the mind,
> *sannyasyaste sukham vasi* abandons dwelling
> happiness controller, *nava-dvare pure dehi*, nine gates
> city person embodied, *naiva kurvan na karayan*, never
> the doing or the doer.
>
> **Abandoning the dwelling of controller of the mind**
> **is joyful to the person in the city of nine gates,**
> **who is never the doing or the doer.**

A person who is aware that God is in control over everything, including the mind, becomes joyful. No longer is the person living in illusion where he sees himself as cause and controller of his reality. That illusory reality brings distress because we know we are fallible and weak in the face of the world around us. Being in illusion keeps us separate from the peace and joy of knowing the true nature of reality. Knowing that the all-perfect and all-powerful supreme lord of the universe is in control over everything we experience, brings a sense of peace and joy. Knowing that God is perfectly capable of taking care of everything, and is taking care of everything, leaves us without the stress of seeing our existence dependent on ourselves.

> na kartrtvam na karmani
> lokasya srjati prabhuh
> na karma-phala-samyogam
> svabhavas tu pravartate

na karttritvam na karmani, not the doer nor the action, *lokasya srijati prabhuh*, in the world the jiva creates, *na karma-phala-samyogam* no connection to the consequence of action, *svabhavas tu pravarttate* nevertheless take place due to inherent nature.

The jiva is not the doer nor is the cause of actions, nor is connected to the reactions from actions (not the controller, doing or doer), nevertheless they take place because of the nature of the jiva.

Bhagavad-gita 7.27-28

iccha-dvesa-samutthena
dvandva-mohena bharata
sarva-bhutani sammoham
sarge yanti parantapa

iccha-dvesa-samutthena, desire and aversion rising from, *dvandva-mohena bharata* delusion of duality arjuna, *sarva-bhutani sammoham*, all people are mesmerized, *sarge yanti parantapa*, creation enter arjuna.

All jivas at their very conception are mesmerized by the delusion of duality which leads to the rise of desire and aversion.

When the jiva is born it is deluded by the nature of reality. Everything seems to be going on independently from a central controlling power, plan and purpose. The jiva acquires a dualistic vision of reality. It sees itself as separate from everything else and acting under it’s own power and will. By that deluded vision of reality it becomes attracted or repulsed to the variety it experiences.

yesam tv anta-gatam papam
jananam punya-karmanam
te dvandva-moha-nirmukta
bhajante mam drdha-vratah

yesam tv anta-gatam papam, however those whose misfortune has finally gone away, *jananam punya-karmanam*, those people actions are pure and virtuous, *te dvandva-moha-nirmukta*, they are free from the delusion of duality, *bhajante mam drdha-vratah* they adore or worship me with a fixed vow or determination.

However, those whose misfortune has finally gone away, their actions are pure and virtuous being free from the delusion of duality, they are steadfast in their worship and adoration of me.

When the jiva becomes free from the vision of duality, from seeing a separation between God and itself, or between God and anything else, then the jiva lives in reality and it’s life is lived in fulfillment of it’s purpose, i.e. to be in a perfected relationship with God.

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Smooth criminals

This post is a reply to a comment from Sam aka Samkooshesh to the Krishna's Truth post. Sam had asked me to listen to a lecture by ISKCON leader and teacher Urmila Devi Dasi, where she expounds on her ideas about sex (i.e. the same as Prabhupada's), saying that she had something interesting to say I should listen to. I replied:

> I'm not really so keen on listening to a lecture by Urmila unless she has something new to say she hasn't said before e.g. "The fact remains, however, that sexual desire is the main way that our root, core envy of the Lord manifests." Such apasiddhanta is not based on shastric teaching, but rather on various things Prabhupada taught. Can you tell us what if any new ideas not already taught in ISKCON Urmila talks about in that lecture? From what I know of what she teaches it's the standard stuff mentioned in the posts I wrote about her and her views at The Idiot Contest

Sam then replied:

> Thanks for your reply. I read the post you referenced and in light of that, I think you already have attempted to address most of HG Urmila dd's points. There are some other points which I consider new and interesting but with respect, judging by your views and tone in your 'human nature' post, I don't think you're

> interested in exploring those points further. As you said, you're not so keen on listening to anything by Urmila. I'll respect that.
>
> In retrospect, I think my original post was perhaps (more than) a little optimistic and I would have benefited from reading more of your blog before posting. You appear to be very attached to your views and there seems to be a significant difference between your definition of acceptable evidence and mine, so I won't try to dissuade you.
>
> I do have a question however, for my own edification. You wrote: "What we actually find in authentic shastra (scripture) is the idea that sexuality should be limited for a while, and for a purpose. That purpose is in freeing up time and mental energy to become spiritually educated." If you could provide shastra pramana to back this up, I would appreciate it.

I don't mind hearing something new from Urmila, it's just that what I've heard from her in the past leaves me doubtful she has anything essentially new to say. I don't want to spend two hours or whatever trying to figure that out, if you want just tell me if you think she has anything different to say from the past.

As for pramana—you know it's interesting how Prabhupada taught about sex, not only in the lives of sadhakas but also in Vaikuntha. As I've shown here previously, when it comes to Vaikuntha you can find contradictory ideas put forth by Prabhupada, with the result of contradictory ideas coming from his followers. For example, you can see the idea that all sex for enjoyment's sake is unwanted, *including sex in Vaikuntha*, from some of Prabhupada's followers (e.g. in Abhaya Mudra devi dasi's writing), and the opposite idea as well (e.g. in Urmila devi dasi's lectures).

They just pick and choose what they want from Prabhupada and then

ignore his statements or writings to the contrary. They do the same thing on the origin of the jiva—except with that you can add the writings of Bhaktisiddhanta and Bhaktivinoda, each of whom wrote quite a bit on the origin of the jiva. Their statements make the case that the jivas in samsara came here without ever being in Vaikuntha. Not only do those who support the fall of the jiva from Vaikuntha pick and choose Prabhupada's statements which support them while ignoring his statements to the contrary (he contradicted himself numerous times on the ability of the jiva to fall from Vaikuntha), with Bhaktivinoda and Bhaktisiddhanta some have actually invented things they supposedly wrote. For example you can see this quote or a version of it commonly used as proof of Bhaktivinoda supporting the idea of the fall from Vaikuntha:

> When he is imprisoned in the material world, the spirit soul does not lose his original spiritual form, the form he had in the spiritual world of Vaikuntha. However, because of contact with matter the imprisoned soul loses the memory of his original spiritual form in Vaikuntha. Still, his original spiritual form does not cease to exist. The soul's faith, desire and happiness are then directed toward matter. The soul's rasas, which were originally manifested in the spiritual world, are then perverted and reflected into the pains, pleasures and various other states in the material world.

Here is another version of it:

> However, because of contact with matter, the imprisoned soul loses the memory of his original spiritual form in Vaikuntha. . . material rasas are perverted reflections of the soul's original spiritual rasas.

Those are made up quotes, they don't exist in that book, but they've been commonly used for many years, even by ISKCON gurus. If they had done a

little research instead of just accepting them as accurate quotes, they would have found out they're bogus. The problem with those types of people is they aren't interested in the truth of what they're promoting, so they just look for quotes to back up what they already believe or want to promote. Here is another one where they twist what is being said:

> It is the jivas who are the attendants in His Sports. They become attached to matter, having deviated from their own essential nature as the result of their desire for enjoyment.

That or a version of it is said to be from Bhaktisiddhanta. It is, but it's used out of context, he was referring to jivas in the material world who take part in Krishna lila, not to jivas in Vaikuntha. Here is the full segment:

> According to the Vaishnava Philosophy, the Sportive Manifestation of God is of two kinds. One kind is the creation of the material and spiritual universe and its systematization with inviolable rules. The school of intelligent empiricists can to a certain extent experience this type of God's Sportive Manifestation. The second kind is the Descent of God's Transcendental Sport in this created universe. It is the jivas who are the attendants in His Sports. They become attached to matter having deviated from their own essential nature as the result of their desire for enjoyment.

They also use mistranslations and quote them out of context, for example this from Bhaktisiddhanta is often used to support the fall of the jiva from enlightened existence in Vaikuntha with God:

> Then being bewildered and covered, he is fallen from advaya-vaikuntha.

Here is what they usually leave out:

> The conditioned soul, binding himself to sense

> perception, exists in the material world having attachment or hatred along with his material experience, but he cannot understand that these do not exist in the nature of Vaikuntha. Maya, which is the energy of Lord Vishnu and real, bewilders the jiva, who is part a product of the tatastha sakti, in sense perception and keeps him without service to Lord Vishnu. Then being bewildered and covered, he is fallen from advaya-vaikuntha.

Bhaktisiddhanta is talking about conditioned souls and how maya isn't present in Vaikuntha, so why would he all of sudden at the end say: the jiva is "bewildered and covered, he is fallen from vaikuntha?" Well, he isn't saying jivas fall from Vaikuntha. This is the Bengali he wrote: *advaya-vaikuntha haite cyuta haya*. They're translating *cyuta* as *fallen*, as if the jiva fell from Vaikuntha. It can mean fallen, but it can also mean detached, dislocated, etc. The full statement makes no sense if he first says that there is no maya in Vaikuntha, but then says the jivas there become covered by maya and fall down. Instead he is just saying that those jivas who are bewildered by maya are dislocated, detached from Vaikuntha. Even if fallen is used it would mean fallen in the sense of degradation, e.g. the society is fallen from grace—meaning degraded.

How do we know how to understand and translate those things correctly? Because we know unequivocally that both Bhaktivinoda and Bhaktisiddhanta wrote *extensively* on the origin of the jiva, always claiming that the jivas in samsara didn't come from Vaikuntha, that at their emerging from an unconscious state, which Bhaktisiddhanta calls "santa rasa," which is synonymous with an unconscious existence, that they gain the aptitude to go to Vaikuntha or to conditioned life (emerging from Tatastha or Mahavishnu—essentially synonymous with Brahman). They also write extensively on the nature of jivas in Vaikuntha being nitya-mukta, forever liberated, never affected by maya. But those who want to promote a selective version of Prabhupada ignore the mountains of data from Bhaktisiddhanta and Bhaktivinoda which refutes their agenda, but do misquote or make up quotes attributed to them to support their misguided

views. They also ignore acharyas previous to them for the same reason—they all say the same thing, that liberated jivas never fall.

And so we see the same phenomena whenever there is a controversy with something Prabhupada taught. Regardless of the controversy, e.g. his views on race, women, cosmology, homosexuality, sex, origin of the jiva in samsara—all controversial things he said are dealt with in various ways by his followers who want to hide the truth. They either pick and choose some things, and ignore contradictory things he said to create a selective dishonest vision of what Prabhupada said—and or they simply make stuff up, or lie—or repeat made up stuff or lies they've been led to believe are true. And they do the same when referring to past acharyas or scripture, most usually ignoring anything which contradicts their agenda, but also taking things out of context or mistranslating, etc.

And so it is with sex. As I've shown, Prabhupada contradicted himself, not only on sex for nitya-baddha jivas (jivas in samsara), but also for sex in Vaikuntha. For an example of his contradictions about sex—he said that kshatriyas (warrior and ruling caste) can have sex for pleasure, get intoxicated, gamble, or even eat meat. He wrote and said that a few times, but since that contradicts what he usually teaches about a jiva absolutely having to give up those things, that only Krishna is allowed to be "an enjoyer," and that the desire to enjoy is due to envy of Krishna and keeps you in samsara—his followers ignore what he said about kshatriyas, and always claim any sex or intoxication, or whatever types of sense enjoyment, are all sinful and completely debilitating to your spiritual advancement, and lead to repeated births of suffering in samsara, for everyone, all of the time, regardless of who you are or what level of consciousness or spiritual advancement you're on. Prabhupada even said that raganuga bhaktas don't necessarily follow rules and regulations, but they shouldn't be judged as fallen or degraded. But you won't hear that from ISKCON or most of his followers.

What do the previous acharyas of Gaudiya Vaishnavism teach on sex? It depends on the person, on the level of consciousness a person is on—that determines what level of renunciation is necessary or required. Generally

shastra teaches that renouncing sense enjoyment is done not as an inherently necessary lifestyle, as in the idea of some types of Shaivites or other yogis where they believe tyaga (renunciation of worldly pursuits or enjoyments) will lead to siddhi (mystic powers). Rather the idea is that sensual enjoyment is a distraction from the purpose of your existence in samsara, i.e. freeing oneself from avidya (spiritual ignorance), attaining moksha (liberation from samsara), and Vaikuntha (life lived with God personally in the heavenly world).

Shastra teaches that there are different paths for people on different levels. Dharma (duty), artha (mundane prosperity), kama (sensual enjoyment), moksha (spiritual enlightenment). That is the Vedic path for most people, according to Vedic shastra. Those are arranged in chronological order based on the life of a person, i.e. first do your duty be it familial or communal, try and develop your material situation and prosper, enjoy life, then devote yourself to enlightenment.

People like Prabhupada or similar gurus disregard such teaches. They insist that the only path is moksha, the seeking of enlightenment, with the giving up of literally everything else, and the necessity of living the lifestyle of a renunicate, for everyone, for your entire life. If you can’t handle that, then there is a concession made for “weak men” to get married, but still they have to act more or less like sannyasis (celibate renunciates of all worldly pleasures) otherwise they are too fallen to spiritually advance. Oddly he also promoted a type of varnashrama, which in the Vedic model is centered around the dharma, artha, kama, moksha, paradigm. But in his model the paths of dharma, artha, and kama, are left out of varnashrama, turning varnashrama into an extended yoga ashram community of renunciates. He claims it’s what Bhaktisiddhanta envisioned as “Daivi” varnashrama, i.e. a more spiritualized type of varnashrama. But that seems to be a concoction and not what Bhaktisiddhanta meant (he meant a Krishna or Vaishnava-centric varnashrama).

Even if you take up the renunciate spiritual path, once you’re ready for raganuga-bhakti, in the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, rules and regulations are no longer essential.

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Sharī’ah law and Prabhupada

Technically the title of this blog post should be *“***Velayat-i faqih** and Prabhupada,” but since mostly only Muslims, political scientists, or religious scholars know what that is, I used the phrase commonly misunderstood to be the same concept, “Sharī’ah Law.” Let me make this clearer: If I ask you what you think Sharī’ah Law is all about, likely you’ll answer it’s about theocracy, where the laws and legal system are determined first and foremost by religious teachings.

That is technically called *Velayat-i faqih*, and contrary to popular misconception, is brand new to the Islamic world. It is not, as commonly thought, a form of fundamentalism, rather it’s a legal enforcement of scripture on the wider society. It’s a legal issue. It is theocracy. Rule in governing or legal issues are to be made based on the teachings of the scriptures, and the teachings of the respected early leaders of Islam—but not by government workers or leaders. Rather, the government workers and leaders will be under the direction and power of select clerics.

Velayat-i faqih first made it’s appearance in 1970 when Iran’s Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was in exile in Iraq. At the time the ruler of Iran was a king, Shah Reza Pahlavi, one of the richest men in the world. He had been installed as the king by the CIA and MI6 in service to American and British oil interests in the 1950s. The democratically elected leader of the secular government was overthrown in a coup and a Shah was installed as a puppet of American and British interests. As Iran’s culture was becoming more and more western in nature, and away from the more traditional Shia culture, it also became more exploited by the Shah and his cohorts,

with oil revenues not being used for the country. This led to mass poverty, corruption, and a violent state secret police (SAVAK). Political unrest followed and there were many that were forced to leave the country in fear of SAVAK.

In 1970 Ayatollah Khomeini gave a series of lectures to students in Iraq, which has a large population of Shia Muslims—the dominant form of Islam in the Shia Crescent countries of Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Lebanon, and Bahrain (the rest of the Islamic world is mostly all Sunni Muslim). The lectures were turned into a book called *"Velayat-i faqih* or *Guardianship of the Jurist* also called *Islamic Government: Governance of the Jurist*.

That book inspired the mass of Iranians who felt exploited and abused by the Shah. When it was all over Iran became the first Muslim country to enact a theocracy, or what is commonly called in the west today, Sharī'ah Law (Sharī'ah is the religious laws of Islam). That had never happened before. It created a firestorm of controversy in the Islamic world. Traditionally the religious and governance parts of Muslim society were not melded into one. They were more like Saudi Arabia with a monarchy, or they had more modern types of governments like democracy, fascism, or socialism. After the Iranian Revolution, the jihadist fever to bring theocracy to the Islamic world, or what's been called Islamization, has received all the press outside the Islamic world—leading many people today to think that the entire Islamic world is and always has been like that.

Interestingly, the founder of ISKCON had been teaching the same thing for years by that time. Those familiar with the teachings found in the books sold by ISKCON, either by the founder Srila Prabhupada, or by his followers, will have little trouble remembering what they teach on the proper governance of society. Srila Prabhupada proposed a grand scheme to "re-introduce" what his followers have been mistakenly led to believe to be "Vedic culture" as a replacement for the modern cultures of the world. This had never been proposed by gurus in India probably because they live in India where they like to believe that Vedic culture is still alive and well (it isn't).

Those of you new to ISKCON or it's teachings may have the mistaken idea of ISKCON as simply an organization of Bhakti Yoga ashrams and temples. You may believe that they are so enthusiastic and devoted to proselytizing because of whatever reason you think religious people have for their passion—submission to God, wanting something from God, sincerely wanting to help people, or position and power. Those are the common reasons, and they are true to one degree or another depending on the person. But there is another reason as well for the passion of so many of Prabhupada's followers. They want, and sincerely believe, that they have been given, by God, the job of taking over the world and installing a theocracy.

Anyone who listens or reads from ISKCON knows that a lot of their preaching has to do with avoiding or changing what is going on in the rest of the world. Of course there's a lot of purely spiritual conversing, but heavily mixed in with that is a heavy dose of criticism of everything and everyone else in the world that Prabhupada spoke of as sinful, wrong, evil, decadent, etc. He promoted an alternative society which he labeled *Vedic*. Not knowing anything about Vedic culture (pre-Islamic India), his followers accepted whatever he said on Vedic culture as words from on high.

Prabhupada's political vision is rooted in monarchy (because ancient India had monarchy). He laughingly called democracy "demon-crazy." Which may not be a bad assessment, but he proposed a political system which leaves you at the mercy of a dictator, and, as we shall see, a council of dictators as well. Even though democracy inevitably becomes oligarchy in large societies, due to the nature of democracy (see the Iron law of oligarchy) at least there is a chance for change if the leadership is unpopular enough. Not so with dictatorships, which is what a monarchy is, and also what Prabhupada specifically liked about it.

Lecture on BG 1.4-5 — London, July 10, 1973

Prabhupada: So up to that point, Mahārāja Parīkṣit, the whole planet was very nicely governed by dictatorship. So we can bring in such dictatorship, provided that dictator is perfectly Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Press Conference at Airport — July 28, 1975, Dallas

Prabhupada: So dictatorship is good, provided the dictator is highly qualified spiritually.

Room Conversation — August 21, 1975, Bombay

Prabhupada: I like this position, dictatorship. Personally I like this.

Prabhupada: Mahatma Gandhi was practically a dictator, but he was a man of high moral character, so people accepted him. Dictatorship can be good provided the dictator is spiritually developed.

Morning Walk — January 12, 1976, Bombay

Prabhupada: Dr. Patel: Now she is not going to have any more elections. “Elections are not necessary. People have given me the mandate to rule over them.”

Prabhupāda: Yes, that’s nice. If the dictator, executive officer, is very nice, religious, then there is no need of this election.

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Narayana Maharaja's irony and ecstasy

This is a reply to Mayesvara’s comments on the Reality Check post:

Mayesvara, in your comment you said:

> So you are saying that Krishna’s words should be understood like this: “Though they be of lower birth, or vaisyas, or sudras or women…” In other words, lower birth is one category of people whilst women are another category – not that women, vaisyas and sudras are all in the category of papa yoni. Is that correct?
>
> I think I remember Hridayananda Maharaja give a similar translation to the one you are suggesting. That makes sense to me because Krishna says that people are placed in the varnasrama system according to guna and karma, not according to birth – why should it be any different for women? One is sinful because of their actions not because of their birth. Of course one could argue that the sinful activities in the previous life were the cause of having to take birth in a woman’s body but that sounds like the same kind of argument employed by the caste brahmanas – that one is a brahmana by birth and not by qualification. To say that one is sinful by dint of their gender in this life and not by their actions is unjust.

> I’m still curious though, to get a scholarly breakdown of the Sanskrit to show exactly why the verse should be translated as you suggest and how the translation in the Bhagavad-Gita As It Is is wrong. Can you show that? Have you had any exchange with the Sanskrit scholars in Iskcon about this? I would be curious to know what they say.

Krishna isn’t referring to everyone as papa-yoni. He is saying that those of low birth (outside of varnashrama), sudras, vaisyas, and women are able to attain Him. In the next verse Krishna says “How much (more so) for brahmanas, saintly devotees and saintly kings”. The point he is making is that anyone can attain moksa by taking up Krishna bhakti. During that time usually women, vaisyas, sudras, and those outside the varnasrama system (papa-yoni), didn’t spend the same amount of time in spiritual education and practice as did the brahmins, kshatriyas, or rajarshis. Women had to raise families and take care of the household, vaisyas were busy learning a trade and then working, sudras were busy learning crafts and labor and working for vaisyas or others. They didn’t have lots of time to go live in an ashram and learn scriptures or yoga for years at a stretch. The brahmins, rishis, and kshatriyas did have that time and education.

So Krishna’s point was that it doesn’t take a lot of time and energy and scholarship to attain moksa, you don’t have to go live in an ashram for years to learn the Vedas or all about yajnas, all you have to do is follow what he is speaking in the Gita. He is not saying that women, vaisyas, sudras, or those outside of varnasrama are “less intelligent”. Prabhupada claimed that everyone but male brahmins and kshatriyas are “less intelligent” and papa-yoni.

Sridhar Swami, the famous Bhagavat commentator whom Sri Chaitanya considered to be the best interpreter, wrote this about that verse in his commentary to the Gita:

> What is there to wonder at that devotion to Me purifies one who is lax in conduct, when it liberates from

> transmigratory existence even the low-born and unqualified persons. This is being stated: Even they who are of sinful birth, of low birth, i.e., the outcastes, etc., and they who are Vaishyas, engaged merely in agriculture, etc., and women, Sudras and the rest, who are devoid of (Vedic) study, etc. – even they, taking refuge in Me, worshiping Me, verily, undoubtedly, attain the highest goal.

Visvanatha Chakravarti Thakura is considered one of the leading past Gaudiya Vaishnava authorities. In his commentary he paraphrases the verse and gives the meaning of papa-yonayah:

> "In this way, bhakti to Me does not consider the incidental discrepancies of a person who behaves improperly due to karma. What is the wonder in this? My bhakti does not consider the natural, inherent defects in those who are badly behaved because of their caste."
>
> Antyaja, mlecchas (outcastes, non-Vedic), etc., are called papa-yonayah (those of sinful birth).

Here are other well known translations and commentaries:

Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Maharaja

O son of Prtha, low-born persons of degraded lineage, women, merchants, or laborers they also attain the supreme destination by taking full refuge in Me.

Sri Ramanuja

Women, Vaisyas and Sudras, and even those who are of sinful birth, can attain the supreme state by taking refuge in Me.

Swami Sivananda

माम् Me, हि indeed, पार्थ O Partha, व्यपाश्रित्य taking refuge in, ये who, अपि even, स्युः may be, पापयोनयः of sinful birth, स्त्रियः women, वैश्याः Vaisyas, तथा also, शूद्राः Sudras, ते they, अपि also, यान्ति attain, पराम् the Supreme, गतिम् Goal.

Commentary: Chandalas or outcastes are of a sinful birth. Women and Sudras are debarred by social rules from the study of the Vedas. What is wanted is devotion. There is no need for family traditions. The elephant Gajendra remembered Me with devotion and attained Me in spite of his being an animal. The lowest of the low and the vilest of the vile can attain Me if they have faith and devotion, if they sing and repeat My Name and if they think of Me always and think of no worldly object. Prahlada was a demon and yet by his devotion forced Me to incarnate as Narasimha. Birth is immaterial. Devotion is everything. The Gopis attained Me through their devotion. Kamsa and Ravana attained Me through fear. Sisupala reached Me through hatred. Narada, Dhruva, Akrura, Suka, Sanatkumara and others attained Me through their devotion. Nandan, a man of low caste but a great devotee of Lord Siva, had direct vision of the Lord in Chidambaram in South India. Raidas, a cobbler, was a great devotee. In the spiritual life or in the Adhyatmic sphere all the external distinctions of caste, colour and creed disappear altogether. Shabari, though a Bhilni (a tribe) by birth, was a great devotee of Lord Rama. Hindu scriptures are full of such instances. Hinduism does not restrict salvation to any one group or section of humanity. All can attain God if they have devotion.

Kashinath Telang

O son of Prithâ! even those who are of sinful birth, women, Vaisyas; and Sûdras likewise, resorting to me, attain the supreme goal.

Swami Gambhirananda

For, O son of Prtha, even those who are born of sin-women, Vaisyas, as also Sudras. Sivananda Swami’s instruction of this portion is: women, Vaisyas as also Sudras, and even others who are born of sin (i.e., those who are born low and are of vile deeds, viz Mlecchas, Pukkasas and others). Madhusudana Sarasvati also takes papa-yonayah (born of sin) as

a separate phrase, and classifies women and others only as those debarred from Vedic study, etc. – even they reach the highest Goal by taking shelter under Me.

Swami Adidevananda

By taking refuge in Me even men of evil birth, women, Vaisyas and also Sudras attain the supreme state.

Ramananda Prasad

Anybody, including women, merchants, laborers, and the evil-minded can attain the supreme goal by just surrendering unto My will (with loving devotion), O Arjuna.

Shri Purohit Swami

For even the children of sinful parents, and those miscalled the weaker sex, and merchants, and labourers, if only they will make Me their refuge, they shall attain the Highest.

Sri Aurobindo

Those who takes refuge with Me, O Partha, though outcastes, born from a womb of sin, women, Vaishyas, even Shudras, they also attain to the highest goal.

Franklin Edgerton — Founder of American Linguistic Society, Professor Emeritus of Sanskrit at Yale University.

For if they take refuge in Me, son of Prtha, even those who may be of base origin, women, men of the artisan caste, and serfs too, even they go to the highest goal.

Barbara Stoler Miller

If they rely on me Arjuna, women, commoners, men of low rank, even men born in the womb of evil, reach the highest way.

Sir Edwin Arnold

O Pritha's Son! whoso will turn to Me, Though they be born from the very womb of Sin, Woman or man; sprung of the Vaisya caste Or lowly disregarded Sudra, – all Plant foot on the highest path.

Mahatma Gandhi

For finding refuge in Me, even those who though are born of the womb of sin, women, vaishyas, and shudras too, reach the supreme goal.

The following translation is from Sripad Narayana Maharaja's Bhagavad Gita which I downloaded a few weeks ago. What's ironic about this translation is that there was a big stink on the web not so long ago after it came to light that Sripad Narayana Maharaja had claimed that the editors of Prabhupada's Gita made a mistake on this verse. He said that devotees were complaining that the mistake ended up causing people to lose faith in Krishna because it seems to be a misogynist teaching. Narayana Maharaja said that this sloka doesn't say that women are papa-yoni. He said that the grammar is incorrect in Prabhupada's Gita. He said that the incorrect grammar changes the true meaning of Krishna's words and makes it appear that He is saying that women, vaisyas, and sudras are all papa-yoni. Narayana Maharaja claimed that Prabhupada would never say such an untrue thing. In the Reality Check post I show that Prabhupada often claimed that women were papa-yoni in many lectures and talks. Most likely Prabhupada's translation in his Gita with the grammar making it seem that Krishna says women are papa-yoni, was done on purpose because that is what Prabhupada believed.

But guess what appears in Sripad Narayana Maharaja's Bhagavad Gita!

> mam hi partha vyapasritya / ye pi syuh papa-yonayah
> striyo vaisyas tatha sudras / te pi yanti param gatim
>
> partha – O son of Pritha; vyapasritya – by taking
> shelter; mam – of

> Me; hi – certainly; api – even; te – those; ye – who; syuh – may be;
> papa-yonayah – born of sinful parentage; striyah – women;
> vaisyah – merchants; tatha – and; api – even; sudrah – manual
> labourers; yanti – attain; param – the supreme; gatim – destination.
>
> **O Partha, by taking shelter of Me, even the lowborn,**
> **such as women, merchants, sudras, or whoever,**
> **are certain to attain the supreme destination**.

His word for word is correct, but then in the verse we see "*such as*" which isn't in the Sanskrit nor the word for word and **which changes the verse into the exact same thing as Prabhupada's Gita!**

From Purebhakti.com

> This profound translation of Srimad Bhagavad-Gita by Srila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja is sure to inspire sincere students of bhakti in their practices. It is considered complimentary to the authoritative and popular Bhagavad-Gita As It Is by Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja. This present edition contains the Bhavanuvada of the Sarartha-Varsini-Tika (a shower of the essential meanings) of the illustrious Rasacarya, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, which was originally penned in Sanskrit, now in English for the first time. His commentary has been further illuminated by Srila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja's Sarartha-Varsini Prakasika-vrtti, which guides the reader into profound aspects of the siddhanta. Consequently, the innermost intentions of the Gita are revealed to the modern audience. Some of

> the brilliant Rasika-ranjana commentaries by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, have been included within this Prakasika-vrtti. Over 1,121 pages including comprehensive glossary and sloka index.

Update

According to comments from Stri, below, the hard copy version of Narayana Maharaja's Gita is different than the digital copy. I don't have a hard copy, so I can't check to see if she is being truthful. Here is what she says is the translation in the physical book:

> O Partha, by taking shelter of me, even the low-born, as well as women, merchants, sudras, or whoever, are certain to attain the supreme destination.

If that is true it shines a bad light on his editorial staff. For their guru to make such a big deal about Prabhupada's version being wrong, then to have the same mistaken translation in his online Gita translation, calls into question the credibility of all of his translations.

Update II

I have rechecked the online Gita to see if any changes were made, this is the new version, it's still wrong though, and not in sync with the physical copy:

> O Partha, by taking shelter of Me, even low-born women, merchants, sudras or whoever, are certain to attain the supreme destination.

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Reality check

On May 29 2008 the chairman of the GBC, Ramai Swami, posted an article entitled International GBC Statement Reaffirming Vaishnava Respect for Women on Chakra.org, Dandavats.com, The Sampradaya Sun and other Gaudiya Vaishnava news sites.

This was in reaction to complaints from many devotees about a blog entitled *Hare Krishna Diary*

What was the problem? The blog owner was in reality doing nothing more than repeating the words of Srila Prabhupada. So why were some followers of Srila Prabhupada so upset? Because they were not dealing with the reality of what Srila Prabhupada taught and it's implications and effects on those people who accept Srila Prabhupada as infallible. Some people are able to deal with the truth that Srila Prabhupada said what he said. Others refuse to accept the truth and then attack those people who repeat what Prabhupada said and who live their lives by what he said. Those who refuse to accept that those who are repeating what Prabhupada said about women are in reality only repeating what Srila Prabhupada has said, remain oblivious to the fact that the cause of what they dislike in Prabhupada's followers is the teachings of Srila Prabhupada. They believe that those who repeat what Prabhupada has said about women are somehow apostates from the teachings of Srila Prabhupada and worthy of being vilified and shut down. When they are confronted with their denial of reality–that it is Srila Prabhupada's teachings which they are fighting against, they can experience a type of cognitive dissonance.

This was made clear recently by 2 articles appearing in Chakra and in a blog by ISKCON leader and guru HH Jayadvaita Swami.

In one article Jadurani Dasi writes to inform us that a youtube.com user had posted a video of a lecture by Sripad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja in such a way as to distort what he said to claim that he was speaking “blasphemy” of Srila Prabhupada. Jadurani Dasi was correct in showing that in fact Sripad Narayana Maharaja was actually defending Srila Prabhupada against what he considered to be bad editing by his disciples. But what was being said by Sripad Narayana Maharaja was incorrect in his “defense” of Srila Prabhupada. He was adamant in stating that it was the faulty editing of Srila Prabhupada’s books which can account for the places where you can read that women are “papa-yoni” i.e of sinful low birth, or that women are “less intelligent”, and that black bodied people are low class and sudras.

It is understandable that a person like Sripad Narayana Maharaja who has devoted his life to preaching would not be well versed in the teachings of Srila Prabhupada. After all he became a devotee long before Srila Prabhupada came to the west and no doubt has spent most of his time studying the books and lectures of others. Anyone who is well versed in the teachings of Srila Prabhupada knows that blaming the editors of his books is not going to explain the same teachings which are found in recorded lectures and conversations. For example Sripad Narayana Maharaja has blamed the editors for implying that Srila Prabhupada said that women are “papa-yoni”. He informs us that it is a mistake to claim that women are sinful or low birth and that Srila Prabhupada would never make such an untrue statement. He also makes the same claim about calling women “less intelligent” and black bodied people as sudras.

The reality is that it is not the fault of the editors because these types of statements are made in recordings of Srila Prabhupada. For example:

> **Answers to a Questionnaire from Bhavan’s Journal — June 28, 1976, Vrndavana**

Otherwise, why Krsna says papa-yoni? Papa-yoni. Striyo (women) vaisyas tatha sudras. They are also taken as papa-yoni. And what to speak of the sudras and candalas? They must be papa-yoni. Only the brahmana, ksatriya, they are taken as highly elevated.

Lecture on BG 9.29-32 — New York, December 20, 1966

Mam hi partha vyapasritya ye 'pi syuh papa-yonayah. Papa-yonayah... Of course, according to Vedic literature, there are mentions of papa-yoni. Yoni means species. Papa-yoni. Just like it is mentioned here, striyah sudrah, striyo vaisyas tatha sudras te 'pi yanti param gatim. Even the striyah, even women, they are also classified amongst the papa-yoni. Papa-yoni means those who have got little facility for advancing themselves in spiritual life. So it is particularly mentioned here, striyah, the woman class, sudra—sudra means the laborer class—and the vaisya, mercantile class. Or less than that.

Because in India, according to the caste system, or varnasrama-dharma, the brahmana and ksatriyas are considered to be the highest in the society, and the vaisyas, a little less than them, and sudras, they are not taken into account. In the similarly, woman class, they are taken as sudra, sudra. Just like the thread ceremony is given to the brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya, but there is no thread ceremony for the woman class. Although the woman is born in the brahmana family, she has no that reformation. Because striyah, woman class, are taken less intelligent, they should be given protection, but they cannot be elevated. But here in the Bhagavad-gita, He surpasses all these formalities. Lord Krsna surpasses all these formalities. He is giving

facility to everyone. Never mind what he is. In the social structure, you may consider that woman is less intelligent or sudra or less purified, but in spiritual consciousness there is no such bar.

Room Conversation Varnasrama System Must Be Introduced — February 14, 1977, Mayapura

Sudra is to be controlled only. They are never given to be freedom. Just like in America. The blacks were slaves. They were under control. And since you have given them equal rights they are disturbing, most disturbing, always creating a fearful situation, uncultured and drunkards. What training they have got? They have got equal right? That is best, to keep them under control as slaves but give them sufficient food, sufficient cloth, not more than that. Then they will be satisfied.

Room Conversation — January 21, 1977, Bhuvanesvara

Ramesvara: That’s the trend, then, everywhere, because unemployment is increasing.

Prabhupada: And especially in your country it will be dangerous because these blacks, if they don’t get employment, they will create havoc, these blacks. And they are not civilized. They want money, and if they don’t get money, then they will create havoc.

Gargamuni: Money and liquor.

Hari-sauri: Yes. If they do get money, they just buy it.

Lecture on BG 16.7 — Hawaii, February 3, 1975

Otherwise it doesn’t matter what he is, which family he’s born. It doesn’t matter. Krsna says, you’ll find, mam hi partha vyapasritya ye ‘pi syuh papa-yonayah BG 9.32 . Papa-yoni. To take birth low-grade family, or animal family, these are called papa-yoni. Krsna says that it doesn’t matter if one is born in the papa-yoni, low-grade family. It doesn’t matter. Mam hi partha vyapasritya ye ‘pi syuh papa-yonayah. In the human society, striyah sudras tatha vaisyah, even woman and sudra and vaisya, they are also taken in the category of papa-yoni. Papa-yoni means their intelligence is not very sharp. That is called papa-yoni. And a brahmana means to become very, very highly intellectual. That is called brahmana. Because he’ll understand Brahman.

Lecture on SB 1.2.2 — Rome, May 26, 1974

The duty of Vaisnava is to reclaim these fallen souls. Just like Krsna says in the Bhagavad-gita, mam hi partha vyapasritya ye ‘pi syuh papa-yonayah. Find out this verse:

mam hi partha vyapasritya
ye ‘pi syuh papa-yonayah
striyo vaisyas tatha sudras
te ‘pi yanti param gatim

Krsna says, “Anyone who comes under My shelter, never mind he is the lowest of the low, lowborn…” The striyo vaisyah… Formerly, even the woman and the mercantile community and sudras, they were also considered as papa-yoni. Papa-yoni means whose brain is not very developed. That is papa-yoni. Blunt-headed. What is that?

Nitai:

“O son of Prtha, those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birth—woman, vaisyas merchants, as well as sudras, workers—can approach the supreme destination.”

Prabhupada: So the supreme destination, back to Godhead, back to home, is for everyone. It is not that God… God means for everyone. God does not say, “Only the brahmana class of men, please come here. Others all rejected.” No. He is inviting everyone. Even the lowest of the lowest, low-born, papa-yonayah, women, sudra, or vaisyas, everyone.

Morning Walk — January 9, 1977, Bombay

Prabhupada: I condemn everyone, that “You are all dogs and hogs.” And United Nations a pack of dogs barking. That’s a fact. And in Chicago I said, all women, “You cannot have freedom. You have got only thirty-four-ounce brain, and man has got sixty-four-ounce.” I told them. So I became a subject of very great criticism.

Trivikrama: Women’s liberation.

Prabhupada: I denied, “No, you cannot have.” I told them. One girl in the airship, she was seeing like (makes some gesture-laughter). I asked her, “Give me 7-Up.” “It is locked now.” So I frankly said that “No, no. You cannot have equal rights because your brain is thirty-four ounce.” Actually that’s a fact. Where is woman philosopher, mathematician, scientist? Not a single.

Dr. Patel: Apart from that, I mean, they are made for a particular mission.

Prabhupada: How they can have equal rights? Up to date in the history there is not a single woman who is a great scientist or great philosopher or great…

Dr. Patel: Madame Curie was a…

Prabhupada: All bogus. (laughter)

Dr. Patel: You are getting too harsh on them because…

Prabhupada: No, no. How can I give you equal rights, because your brain is less substance.

Dr. Patel: We cannot degrade our mothers that way.

Prabhupada: It is not degrading. It is accepting the actual fact.

Lecture on SB 7.9.10 Mayapur, February 17, 1976

Krnsa says. Krsna says even papa-yoni, less than the sudra… Sudra is also papa-yoni. Even woman is called papa-yoni according to strict… Striyas sudras tatha vaisya. Vaisya. Except brahmana and ksatriyas, everyone is considered to be lowborn, according to the Vedic injunction. But not that because he is lowborn, he cannot elevate himself. That is not the fact. The present, so-called Hindu society is degraded because if one is born in higher family, brahmana, ksatriya —he may be less than a svapaca —he's accepted as a brahmana. That is the fault.

Press Conference — July 9, 1975, Chicago

Reporter (3): (a woman) Where… Do women fit into this social structure? You keep referring to man.

Prabhupada: Woman is not equally intelligent as a

man.

Reporter (3): Equal in intelligence?

Prabhupada: Not equal intelligence. In the psychology, practical psychology, they have found that the man's brain has been found up to sixty-four ounce, woman... Sixty-four ounce, man's brain. And woman's brain has been found, thirty-six ounce. So therefore woman is not equally intelligent like man.

Evening Darsana — July 8, 1976, Washington, D.C.

If you become dependent on others, then what is the value of this education? Therefore kalau sudra-sambhavah. Everyone is a sudra. But this Krsna consciousness movement says striyo vaisyas tatha sudrah: never mind, even if you are sudra, take to Krsna consciousness, you'll become perfect. Either you become woman or vaisya or sudra, it doesn't matter, or any other papa-yoni, mam hi partha vyapasritya ye 'pi syuh papa-yonayah, te 'pi yanti param.

Lecture on SB 1.3.21 — Los Angeles, September 26, 1972

And it has been found that a woman does not have more than thirty-six ounce of brain substance, whereas in man it has been found that he has got up to sixty-four ounce. Now, this is modern science. Therefore generally, generally, woman, less intelligent than man. You cannot find any big scientist, any big mathematician, any big philosopher amongst woman. That is not possible. Although in your country, you want equal status with man, freedom, but by nature you are less intelligent. What can be done? (laughter)

Interview with Trans-India Magazine — July 17, 1976, New York

So actually this varnasrama system is meant for bringing the man in the lower status of life to the higher status of life. It doesn't matter one is born in a low-grade family. That is also said by Krsna: mam hi partha vyapasritya ye 'pi syuh papa-yonayah. Papa-yoni, lower grade. Striyo vaisyas tatha sudrah BG 9.32 . In the human society, woman, the vaisya and the sudra, they are considered in the lower status, not very intelligent.

Lecture on BG 1.40 — London, July 28, 1973

Canakya Pandita says: visvasam naiva kartavyam strisu raja-kulesu ca. Visvasam naiva kartavyam. "Don't trust women." Visvasam naiva kartavyam strisu. Strisu means women. Raja-kula... And politicians. Yes. Visvasam naiva kartavyam strisu raja-kulesu ca. Never the trust the politician and woman. Of course, when woman comes to Krsna consciousness, that position is different. We are speaking of ordinary woman. Because Krsna says, in another place, striyo vaisyas tatha sudrah BG 9.32 . They are considered, women, vaisya, the mercantile community, and sudra, and the worker class, they are less intelligent. Papa-yoni. When the progeny is defective, then they become less intelligent.

Lecture on SB 1.16.20 — Hawaii, January 16, 1974

Formerly, in the Vedic civilization, even women and sudra, and vaisya, they were also considered amongst the papa-yoni, what to speak of others. But Krsna says, "Never mind whatever papa-yoni one may be." Mam hi

partha vyapasritya: “If one takes shelter of My devotee,” vyapasritya, “and works under his direction, then…” Vyapa. That is called vyapasritya. Visesa rupena asritya. “Then he also…,” te ‘pi yanti param gatim, “he can also go back to home, back to Godhead.” There is no bar.

Sunday Feast Lecture — London, July 25, 1976

People are generally against the mlecchas, yavanas or the candalas because according to Vedic system, the brahmanas, the ksatriya, they are supposed to be pious family, brahmanas and ksatriyas. Less than that, even woman, they are not so pious. So in that sense there is discrimination. But Krsna says that mam hi partha vyapasritya ye ‘pi syuh papa-yonayah. Anyone, it doesn’t matter, even he belongs to the papa-yoni, low-grade family. And because women and vaisyas are sudras are also considered as less important, so Krsna mentions, striyo vaisyas tatha sudras te ‘pi yanti param gatim: “Even women, sudras, or the vaisyas, everyone can be elevated to the higher transcendental platform, param gati.

Lecture on SB 1.7.36-37 — Vrndavana, September 29, 1976

Doesn’t matter whether you are a brahmana or a ksatriya. Krsna confirms it, api cet su-duracarah… No. Mam hi partha vyapasritya ye ‘pi syuh papa-yonayah. Papa-yoni means below the vaisyas, the sudras, they are papa-yonis. Vaisyas also. Striyo vaisyas tatha sudras te ‘pi yanti param gatim. So there is no impediment to approach Krsna because you are a sudra, or candala or woman or vaisya. No. Everyone can… That facility is there.

Lecture on CC Adi-lila 7.91-2 — Vrndavana, March 13, 1974

> Vaisya, sudra and woman, they have been classified in the Bhagavad-gita as less intelligent. Striyo vaisyas tatha sudras te 'pi yanti param gatim

Sri Sri Rukmini Dvaraka-natha – Deity Installation — Los Angeles, July 16, 1969:

> Striyah sudrAs tatha vaisyah, including woman and sudras and vaisyas, they are considered as less intelligent. They are considered as less intelligent.

HH Jayadvaita Swami has made the claim that when Srila Prabhupada said that a woman likes to be raped that Prabhupada didn't really mean it. He writes at http://www.jswami.info/rape

> When you look at the translation and purport for Text 42 and consider the two purports together, you can get a better understanding of Srila Prabhupada's point.
>
> In essence: The male wants to conquer, and the female wants to be conquered. A woman does not want to be sheepishly asked her hand by a bashful, weak-kneed Milquetoast. She wants to be pursued and won, to be fought over by strong and eager suitors, to be "swept off her feet."

What Srila Prabhupada said was nothing about being romantically swept off of your feet.

Purport SB 4.25.41

> In this regard, the word vikhyatam is very significant. A man is always famous for his aggression toward a beautiful woman, and such aggression is sometimes

considered rape. Although rape is not legally allowed, it is a fact that a woman likes a man who is very expert at rape.

Purport SB 4.25.42

When a husbandless woman is attacked by an aggressive man, she takes his action to be mercy. A woman is generally very much attracted by a man's long arms. A serpent's body is round, and it becomes narrower and thinner at the end. The beautiful arms of a man appear to a woman just like serpents, and she very much desires to be embraced by such arms.

The word anatha-varga is very significant in this verse. Natha means "husband," and a means "without." A young woman who has no husband is called anatha, meaning "one who is not protected." As soon as a woman attains the age of puberty, she immediately becomes very much agitated by sexual desire. It is therefore the duty of the father to get his daughter married before she attains puberty. Otherwise she will be very much mortified by not having a husband. Anyone who satisfies her desire for sex at that age becomes a great object of satisfaction. It is a psychological fact that when a woman at the age of puberty meets a man and the man satisfies her sexually, she will love that man for the rest of her life, regardless who he is. Thus so-called love within this material world is nothing but sexual satisfaction.

Morning Walk — May 11, 1975, Perth

Prabhupada: Yes, that is law always. Rape means without consent, sex. Otherwise there is no rape. There was a rape case in Calcutta, and the lawyer was very

> intelligent. He some way or other made the woman admit, “Yes, I felt happiness.” So he was released. “Here is consent.” And that’s a fact. Because after all, sex, rape or no rape, they will feel some pleasure. So the lawyer by hook and crook made the woman agree, “Yes, I felt some pleasure.” “Now, there is consent.” So he was released. After all, it is an itching sensation. So either by force or by willingly, if there is itching, everyone feels relieved itching it. That’s a psychology. It is not that the woman do not like rape. They like sometimes. They willingly. That is the psychology. Outwardly they show some displeasure, but inwardly they do not. This is the psychology.

Then there is the person who recently made the blog called *Dasi* This was posted on May 31 2008 on chakra.org

> The purpose of this blog is to discuss the position of women within our tradition and through the teachings of Srila Prabhupada.

In her first post she wrote

> GBC Resolution 311
>
> We need an icebreaker here. Let’s start off with the GBC Resolution.
>
> ---
>
> 311. End Notes or Appendices in Srila Prabhupada’s Books
>
> Whereas some of Srila Prabhupada’s books contain sentences such as the following, which when taken in isolation may be considered derogatory to and offensive against women:

Although rape is not legally allowed, it is a fact that a woman likes a man who is very expert at rape. (SB 4.25.41, p.)

When a husbandless woman is attacked by an aggressive man, she takes his action to be mercy. (SB 4.25.42, p.)

Generally, when a woman is attacked by a man–whether her husband or some other man–she enjoys the attack, being too lusty. (SB 4.26.26, p.)

Whereas some ISKCON devotees may have used these statements out of context as an excuse to offend, neglect and abuse women;

Whereas some people who read such statements may consider them to be derogatory or offensive, may misunderstand what Srila Prabhupada actually means, and may not want to further read those books, notwithstanding the many other beneficial statements in them;

RESOLVED: That the GBC Body recommends to the BBT Trustees that the above quotes, and other such statements as determined by the BBT, be explained in endnotes or in appendices.

What scriptural rebuttals do you have for this? Either for the annotation issue or for the above quoted material. Are there other quotes that need to be looked at? Are we looking at only statements about women? What about the idea that some of the guru's instructions are relative and some are absolute? Don't be shy. Now's the time. What do you think?

In another post she wrote

> Caitanya das, a disciple of Bhakti Vikasa Swami, continues to spew his distorted view of Vaisnavism. A few days ago there was an apology but now that has been withdrawn.
> http://www.sankirtandiary.blogspot.com/

When it was pointed out to her that what she was objecting to were the teachings of Srila Prabhupada, that what she considers to be offensive and wrong in the words of devotees is really criticism of Srila Prabhupada, that it was Srila Prabhupada who taught them what she considered to be wrong and offensive, she got upset and announced that she is shutting down her blog, she wrote:

> Dear Vaisnavas,
>
> Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Sri Guru and Sri Gauranga. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.
>
> Today I write my final entry for this blog. In a few days I will delete it entirely. It was an experiment for me. I thought it might be possible to have a civilized discussion on some issues that are currently facing us. I was wrong.
>
> I have never received such vituperative attacks in my life. I have also never heard such talk against our Srila Prabhupada. I am very disappointed. Initially I thought this blog would be a service to the devotees. Now, I feel it is a service to the devotees to take it down.
>
> Thank you to all the devotees who sent in words of support. All the best to everyone. May you all dream sweet dreams of Sri Sri Radha and Krsna.
>
> Your servant,

Dasi

In these three cases we can see devotees trying to justify what Srila Prabhupada has taught by either denying that he said what he said (Sripad Narayana Maharaja), trying to give a different meaning to the obvious and direct meaning (HH Jayadvaita), or by blaming Srila Prabhupada's followers for repeating what he taught but being in denial as to the source of those teachings (Dasi).

In the recently released statement from the GBC about "offensive" statements about women they refer us to a statement they made in 1998 about a group of devotees (some were high ranking members of ISKCON) which had coalesced on the internet calling themselves GHQ. Their purpose was to start a movement to eliminate what they saw as female empowerment, feminism, female leadership, etc, in ISKCON. They taught that those things are a very serious deviation from what Srila Prabhupada taught, serious enough to get you thrown out of ISKCON if they had their way. This was what the GBC had to say about the GHQ:

> 1998 Statement by the North American Executive Officers
>
> The North American GBC/Temple President Executive Officers wish to voice our strong disapproval of, and our protest against, the demeaning and ill intended statements made by some members of the GHQ com conference that were recently brought to public attention.
>
> It is our firm position that Srila Prabhupada, the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON, intended his Hare Krishna Movement to be free from all prejudice, sexism, racism and other forms of bigotry.
>
> We affirm that the first and foremost principle of our society is that all people (indeed all sentient beings) are eternal, sacred parts and parcels of the Supreme

> Lord Sri Krishna, and as such should be respected and affirmed in their individual relationship with the Lord, as well as their service to guru and Krishna.
>
> Multiple statements made by members of this Internet conference ridicule, berate and vilify women, other minorities, and individual Vaishnava devotees. They document an organized attempt to prevent women from their God-given rights of self-expression and service to Srila Prabhupada. We denounce such views. They are opposed to the core values and principles of Vaishnava culture which upholds the devotional offerings of all souls as sacred and worthy of our respect and protection.
>
> While we endorse open debate and dialogue within our Krishna Consciousness movement, we must speak out against any discussion that crosses the line of decency, morality, and Vaishnava etiquette and supports an agenda to exploit or minimize a section of our society.

Why do so many devotees disagree on what Srila Prabhupada taught? Isn't it obvious, there in black and white for all to read?

Some people will read the above quotes from Srila Prabhupada and take them as absolute truth. Even though most of what he spoke in those quotes is objectively false. Then there are others who will take into consideration that Srila Prabhupada often would say that when you become a devotee that you transcend your low birth or low intelligence or low position in life. The members of the GHQ and the many devotees who think like them accept the former position while rejecting the latter. The official position of the GBC is to accept the latter position, at least the majority or those who control it. They openly reject the GHQ position of trying to disempower females in ISKCON and their acceptance of treating and speaking of devotee women in the same way that Srila Prabhupada describes women in general. But since the GBC is comprised of many

different minded devotees we can be sure that there are some who believe as the GHQ believes. Also this dichotomy is sure to be found among the gurus in ISKCON.

So how do we rid the devotee community of the belief that Srila Prabhupada's teachings were meant to be accepted as an absolute truth in their description of women and black bodied people for all times, in all circumstances? Should we try to be rid of those beliefs?

We need to first come to the understanding that Srila Prabhupada was not incapable of mistakes, he could make mistakes. Srila Prabhupada never claimed that he could make no mistakes. Yet many devotees deify Srila Prabhupada and by doing so they can experience cognitive dissonance and go into denial mode when it becomes obvious that Srila Prabhupada made mistakes.

For example in the above quotes about brain size, and how intelligence is based on brain size. Srila Prabhupada based his idea about brain size and intelligence from a teacher of his from the 1920s. That man was wrong. In reality women do have larger brains then 34 ounces. Einstein's brain weighed 43 ounces whereas the average female brain weighs between 40-44 ounces. The average man from 46-49 ounces. Different researchers have had slightly different results because brain size is dependent on body size. Tests which included more smaller people got a slightly smaller average for men and women. There are countless women who are very intelligent and have proved so by having won science awards for their discoveries in physics, mathematics, biology, etc. There are countless women scientists and professors today working in all fields of science, math, physics, biology, high tech etc. There are women intellectuals of all types who prove that what Srila Prabhupada said about women not being very intelligent is simply wrong. In fact more women go to college than men in the west. In comparing various intelligence tests for the difference between men and women there is much debate because different tests are argued to be biased in different ways. One thing they all agree on is that in general men are slightly better on average in math and science, while women are slightly better on average with verbal and literary skills

and reading and memory. Those are just averages. In reality there are countless women who work in the sciences or academia, etc, who are vastly more intelligent than countless men. Srila Prabhupada was simply wrong on these points.

Not that it even matters about brain size. The brain is simply made up of chemicals. Chemicals do not cause intelligence. Intelligence comes from Krishna as Paramatma.

Srimad Bhagavatam 5.7.14

paro-rajah savitur jata-vedo
devasya bhargo manasedam jajana
suretasadah punar avisya caste
hamsam grdhranam nrsad-ringiram imah

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is situated in pure goodness. He illuminates the entire universe and bestows all benedictions on His devotees. The Lord has created this universe from His own spiritual potency. According to His desire, the Lord entered this universe as the Supersoul, and by virtue of His different potencies, He is maintaining all living entities desiring material enjoyment. Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto the Lord, who is the giver of intelligence.

Bhagavad Gita 15.15

sarvasya caham hrdi sannivisto
mattah smrtir jnanam apohanam ca
vedais ca sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedanta-krd veda-vid eva caham

I am seated in everyone’s heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. By all the Vedas I am to be known; indeed I am the compiler of

Vedanta, and I am the knower of the Vedas.

Bhagavad Gita 10.34

mrtyuh sarva-haras caham
udbhavas ca bhavisyatam
kirtih srir vak ca narinam
smrtir medha dhrtih ksama

I am all-devouring death, and I am the generating principle of all that is yet to be. Among women I am fame, fortune, fine speech, memory, intelligence, steadfastness and patience.

Some people have almost no brain matter whatsoever yet have high intelligence. The following is from http://www.flatrock.org.nz/topics/science/is_the_brain_really_necessary.htm

Later, a colleague at Sheffield University became aware of a young man with a larger than normal head. He was referred to Lorber even though it had not caused him any difficulty. Although the boy had an IQ of 126 and had a first class honours degree in mathematics, he had “virtually no brain”. A noninvasive measurement of radio density known as CAT scan showed the boy’s skull was lined with a thin layer of brain cells to a millimeter in thickness. The rest of his skull was filled with cerebrospinal fluid. The young man continues a normal life with the exception of his knowledge that he has no brain.

So why would Srila Prabhupada make those statements? There are also countless very successful, beautiful looking, law abiding, highly intelligent, highly educated black bodied people. Claiming that black people are all ugly, stupid, sudras, drunks, criminals, who should be enslaved and would be satisfied being enslaved…is totally ridiculous! Bhakti Tirtha Swami went

to one of the most prestigious universities in the world, Princeton, he was a student leader there. Countless scientists and intellectuals, doctors and lawyers, politicians and preachers, artists and writers and professors, with black bodies exist and have existed for a very long time.

Krishna is in control over everyone and everything, that fact needs to be understood. No one is independent from the control of Paramatma in what they say and do. Srila Prabhupada did what Krishna had him do. Why would Krishna have Srila Prabhupada make so many wrong statements about women and black people? Statements which could cause people to lose faith in Krishna?

The way I see it is that what Srila Prabhupada was empowered to do was seen as so tremendous in creating a world wide organization of Gaudiya Vaisnavas in so short a period, that there was going to be a tendency to deify him. Early in ISKCON history that actually literally happened when a handful of sannyasis started to preach that Prabhupada was God until they were expelled by Prabhupada. Besides that literal deification there is another type of deification which can occur. It is most blatant in the ritvik promoters who want Srila Prabhupada as a kind of Jesus of ISKCON where no one can go to Krishna except through Prabhupada.

Then there are many many others who see Prabhupada as being without the possibility of error, and therefore anyone who doesn’t accept everything Prabhupada ever said as without possibility of error — are blasphemers in their eyes. There has grown a culture of Prabhupada deification in and around ISKCON. It is often used as a weapon to try to enforce personal and or political agendas on ISKCON. Prabhupada’s followers aren’t alone in this. The Narayana Maharaja sanga has shown the propensity to deify Sripad Narayana Maharaja as well by defending everything he has ever said as infallible regardless of what he has said or written. Also many disciples of ISKCON gurus show this propensity as well.

My view is that Krishna purposefully had Prabhupada say untrue and objectionable things to smash the natural growth of a Jesus like worship of Prabhupada, a growth of a Christian type of bastardization of Gaudiya

Vaisnavism. When I first heard that many devotees, even long time devotees were praying to Srila Prabhupada with the belief that he could actually hear and respond to that prayer — I was taken aback at the ignorance of that belief. Leaders in ISKCON even preach that Prabhupada can hear and respond to your prayer. They tell stories bragging about Prabhupada appearing in dreams to them.

They have turned Prabhupada into a God. He has the powers of Paramatma because evidently he can be in Krishna Lila and yet hear and respond to your prayers in whatever language you speak. He can transport himself into your dreams as well. Even though in the Bhagavatam we are told that the jivas in Krishna Lila are kept in ignorance of Krishna's divinity by the power of yoga-maya, still if you pray to Prabhupada to help you serve Krishna he can hear you, understand your language, understand that Krishna is God and that you want to serve God, and then somehow respond to you, all of you, millions of you, all of the time! That belief is widely held and has helped to turn modern Gaudiya Vaisnavism into a shadow of it's original state. Prabhupada's followers are not alone in this, I have heard other gurus claim to have divine powers like omniscience! These fraudulent teachings and beliefs are not true Gaudiya Vaisnavism. They may be taught and believed by many, but intelligent people will see the nonsense that has sprouted in the name of Gaudiya Vaisnavism.

The guru should be treated and seen as good as God, this is the teaching of the Bhagavata. But what that means in truth is not understood by many if not most people. The bona fide guru is as good as God because like an ambassador he is an empowered official representative. Not that we should see or treat the ambassador of a country exactly as we would see or treat the actual leader of a country. The ambassador brings the message of the leader but he does not have all the powers of the leader. The bona fide guru does not have the same infallible nature as God nor the divine powers of God. All jivas are under the control of God and can therefore be made to make mistakes. The bona fide guru may be very close to Krishna and still make mistakes because Krishna controls what the jiva does or does not do at any given moment. Everyone follows Krishna's path in all respects.

Who among you will argue that black bodied people are all ugly low class drunkards who should be made into slaves and that they will actually be “satisfied” if they are forced into slavery and given a little cloth and a meal? Only a person who has deified Srila Prabhupada and become convinced that he is infallible and never made any mistakes would argue for slavery for black people. I know that many people will claim to be total supporters of everything Srila Prabhupada ever said and will see criticism of some of things he said as blasphemy. Then I say they should preach the good of enslaving black people and the stupidity of women. They should preach the above quotes from Prabhupada as well as the following without fear or regret to one and all, otherwise they are hypocrites. If you feel Prabhupada was always right no matter what he said then you should have no problem preaching slavery for black people and keeping your daughters without education or freedom and telling them the reason is because they are too stupid and will become prostitutes.

> -woman has no independence, because they cannot keep their independence—it is not possible.
> -By nature they are weak
> -In the Western countries, the women are given freedom like man, but that is unnatural.
> -So, the conclusion is that women are weak.
> **(SB Lecture, Los Angeles, 11/30/73)**

> -Independence for women means they become like prostitutes.
> -Women cannot do anything independently. To give them independence means to create some trouble.
> **(SB Lecture, Los Angeles, 5/19/72)**

> Satsvarüpa: Yes. (break) Mainly it’s about the girls who are over ten. They were in Vrndävana and discussed this with Jagadisa, but they couldn’t settle up, so they wanted to know what you think. Their idea is that… As of now, there is no plan for a school for the girls over ten, but just that they should return to their parents

and not get any more schooling. But they’re thinking that there should be, and one reason is that you said in France that the girls could learn these sixty-four arts. So they were thinking that there should be a school for girls over ten, and that it should be situated in India. One reason is that in India our teachers can take help from Indian Life Member ladies who know these arts. Our Western devotees don’t know them, the cooking and painting and things like this, but the Indian women do. …

Prabhupada: My opinion is already there according to the… They should be chaste, faithful to husband. Little literary knowledge, they can read. That’s all. Not very much.
(January 31, 1977 Room conversation Bhubaneshwar)

-Women are inferior to men, and men are given full charge of the women.
-Women are supposed to be less intelligent.
(TLK 5)

-Women should not be given freedom. Like a child, she is not given freedom.
(SB Lecture, Los Angeles, 7/11/74)

-Women as a class are no better than boys, and therefore they have no discriminatory power like that of a man.
(SB 1.7.42, purport)

-According to Canakya Pandita, women are generally not very intelligent and therefore not trustworthy.
-As children are very prone to be misled, women are similarly very prone to degradation.

(BG 1.40, purport)

-Now, in the Manu-samhita it is clearly stated that a woman should not be given freedom. That does not mean that women are to be kept as slaves, but they are like children. The demons have now neglected such injunctions, and they think that women should be given as much freedom as men.
(BG 16.7, purport)

-A woman’s attachment to her husband may elevate her to the body of a man in her next life, but a mans attachment to woman will degrade him, and in his next life he will get the body of a woman.
(SB 3.31.41, purport)

-It may be concluded that white or a golden hue is the color of the higher caste, and black is the complexion of the sudras [lower class].
(SB 4.14.45, purport)

-the higher classes of men are white (sukla), and the lower classes of men are black. This division of white and black is in terms of ones white and black duties of life. Pious acts lead one to acquire beautiful features. Impious acts lead one to acquire ugly bodily features.
(SB 3.5.9, purport)

-Yes. We hate to mix with you (a man reported to be homosexual). No gentleman tries to mix with loafers. Even in America, they dont like to live with the blacks. Crows will not like to live with the ducks and white swans. And white swans will not like to live with the crows. That is natural division. Birds of the same feather flock together.
(1/11/77, Allahabad)

Prabhupāda: Yes. They have got money. The Jews have got money. They want to invest and get some profit. Their only interest is how to get money, no nationalism, no religion, nothing of the sort. Therefore it is not now; long, long ago… Therefore Shakespeare wrote “Shylock, the Jew.”

Hari-śauri: Yes. “Shylock.”

Prabhupāda: “One pound of flesh.” The Jews were criticized long, long ago.

(Conversation During Massage — January 23, 1977, Bhuvanesvara)

Tamala Krsna: So we’re… I thought there were girls in Vrindävana now. They said that they’re going to have the girls’ gurukula behind the boys’ gurukula. Gopäla was talking about that.

Prabhupada: No, no, no. No girls.

Tamala Krsna: It should be in another city or somewhere else.

Prabhupada: Yes. They should be taught how to sweep, how to stitch…

Tamala Krsna: Clean.

Prabhupada: …clean, cook, to be faithful to the husband.

Tamala Krsna: They don’t require a big school.

Prabhupada: No, no. That is mistake. They should be taught how to become obedient to the husband.

Tamala Krsna: Yeah, you won’t learn that in school.

Prabhupada: Little education, they can…

Tamala Krsna: Yeah. That they can get at home also.

Prabhupada: They should be stopped, this practice of prostitution.

Prabhupada: Ordinary education is sufficient, ABCD. This is all nonsense, so big, big, sound education and later on become a prostitute. What is this education? (laughter) To make them prostitute, it doesn't require education.
(Conversation: July 10, 1975, Chicago)

Satsvarupa: Srila Prabhupada, is this school for women also, or just for men?

Prabhupada: For men. Women should automatically learn how to cook, how to cleanse home.

Satsvarupa: So they don't attend varnasrama college.

Prabhupada: No, no. Varnasrama college especially meant for the brahmana, ksatriya and vaisya. Those who are not fit for education, they are sudras. That's all. Or those who are reluctant to take education, sudra means. That's all. They should assist the higher class.
(Morning Walk: March 14, 1974, Vrindavan)

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Does Dandavats.com consider Prabhupada a laughingstock?

Today while I was browsing the blog posts that show up on Planet ISKCON (a popular ISKCON related blog aggregator) I saw an article from Dandavats.com (ISKCON'S main blog outlet) from a young lady named Abhi Mudra Dasi. It's title is *Homosexuality and the New Age*. I read it with interest because I've read previous stuff from her on Dandavats which I've found interesting due to it's extremely "conservative" (hardcore Prabhupada fanatic) voice on that website.

When I decided to write about her article I went to Dandavats expecting it to be near the top of the recent blogs since new articles from Dandavats show up on Planet ISKCON when they are first published, but to my surprise it wasn't there at all (as of this writing much later). So I went back to Planet ISKCON to get the link. I don't know Dandavat's blogging policy, so I don't know if they give their bloggers the ability to write what they want without editors checking before they're published or not. So I don't know if the article first appeared on Dandavat's front page and was later removed, or if it never appeared there and only appeared on their RSS feed which was picked up by Planet ISKCON. Normally I've noticed that what appears on Planet ISKCON also appears at the top of Dandavats.com's front page, i.e. since it's a direct feed everything they publish appears on Planet ISKCON at the same time.

I especially wonder because the article is a condemnation of homosexuals and homosexuality, which in and of itself isn't unusual from Prabhupada's more "conservative" followers—but this diatribe was very harsh, and it

uses some very “controversial” quotes from Prabhupada. “Controversial” is a euphemism among many ISKCON leaders and Prabhupada’s followers for Prabhupada’s obviously false beliefs or statements. For example Prabhupada’s statements that divorce is the fault of “weak women,” or that it would be best (for everyone?) if black people were forced into slavery, are spoken of as “controversial.”

Here are the quotes Abhi Mudra Dasi uses in her post:

> That is not enjoyment. Just like sex indulgence. If you indulge in more than necessary, then you will be impotent. Nature will stop. You know impotency? That will be there. Impotency. This homosex is also another sign of impotency. They do not feel sex impulse to woman. They feel sex impulse in man. That means he is impotent. It is impotency.
>
> Arrival – Chicago, July 3, 1975
>
> Now this progeny is bother. It is sense enjoyment, homosex. Progeny, they don’t want. They’re not interested. Only sense gratification. This is another sign of impotency. When after enjoying so many women, they become impotent, then they artificially create another sex impulse in homosex. This is the psychology.
>
> Arrival – Chicago, July 3, 1975
>
> There is no limit of sense gratification. The sense gratification, homosex, they are supporting. Just see. Just see. At least, in animal society there is no homosex. They have created homosex, and that is being passed by the priest, the religious heads.
>
> Room Conversation – August 25, 1971, London

Watchtower, it has criticized…one priest has allowed the marriage between man to man, homosex. So these things are going on. They take it purely for prostitution. That's all. So therefore people are thinking, 'What is the use of keeping a regular prostitution at a cost of heavy expenditure? Better not to have this.'

Talk with Bob Cohen – February 27-29, 1972, Mayapur

The animals also do not support homosex. They never have sex life between male to male. They are less than animal. People are becoming less than animal. This is all due to godlessness.

Conversation with the GBC – May 25, 1972, Los Angeles

Nowadays, of course, they are thinking like that, that man should remain independent, and they'll have homosex, and the woman also independent and they will make some… This is most immoral.

Morning Walk – December 10, 1975, Vrndavana

I am very sorry that you have taken to homosex. It will not help you advance in your attempt for spiritual life. In fact, it will only hamper your advancement. I do not know why you have taken to such abominable activities. What can I say? Anyway, try to render whatever service you can to Krishna. Even though you are in a very degraded condition Krishna, being pleased with your service attitude, can pick you up from your fallen state. You should stop this homosex immediately. It is illicit sex, otherwise, your chances of advancing in spiritual life are nil.

Letter to: Lalitananda – Hawaii 26 May, 1975

Prabhupada makes some obviously wrong or “controversial statements in her quotes, which Abhi Mudra expounds on in her article.

> 1. Animals don’t have homosexual relations, therefore humans who engage in homosexual relations are lower than animals.

In fact homosexual relations are widespread among animal species:

> A 1999 review by researcher Bruce Bagemihl shows that homosexual behavior has been observed in close to 1,500 species.
>
> from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexual_behavior_in_animals:
>
> 2. Homosexuality among men is caused by men having too much sex. By having too much sex they become impotent, and then that impotency causes them to become homosexual.

What that fails to consider is the well documented fact that homosexual desires begin at a young age for most homosexual men, usually when they are prepubescent.

Also that conception fails to take into account that impotency is a condition which is the inability of men for their penis to become erect—which not only has nothing to do with homosexual desire, but would be in fact a bigger problem for homosexual relations between men than heterosexual relations, simply because men can please a women without using their penis, but for men trying to please another man it would be more problematic.

Also Prabhupada fails to take into account that many men are bisexual, without being impotent due to having “too much sex.” They simply aren’t bothered too much by societal taboos. In fact in the ancient world bisexuality was considered normal by many cultures, e.g. Greeks, Romans, Persians, and yes—even India. In the Kama-sutra homosexual relations

between male friends is treated as normal behavior. You may not accept the Kama shastra as authentic, but previous Gaudiya acharyas did in fact refer to them in their writings, and even mentioned Vatsyanana Muni (author of Kama-sutra) as an authority:

Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur writes in his Surata-kathamritam (7)

smara-narapati-vara-rAjye dharmaH zarma-prado'yam
AdiSTaH
vatsyAyana-muni-nirmita-paddhaty-uktAnusAreNa hi

This is the most beneficial dharma that rules in this, the great kingdom of Cupid, the god of love. It has been ordained in accordance with the rules of the rulebook composed by Vatsyayana Muni.

Also from Sri Surata-kathamrta of Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti:

Radharani: My Lord, You are fond of tasting the nectar of these transcendental mellows by speaking in this way. These pastimes of Yours exactly follow the descriptions of the kama-sastra. You are the original author of the kama-sastra. I therefore offer My respectful obeisances unto You.

Krishnadas Kaviraja writes in his Govinda-lilamritam:

tAruNya-bhaTTa-gurutaH samadhIta-kAma-
nyAyAdi-zAstra-cayayA sa sa-tIrthayApi |
citraM na tan-nija-jayAya tayodagRhnAn
naiyAyiko hi guruNApi vivAdam icchet || 9.21 ||

Radha and Krsna went to consult Tarunya Bhatta, the professor of kama sastra, eager to study under Him.

> Although They were classmates, they still wanted to argue with each other. There is no fault in this, nor is this astonishing, for students of logic want to argue even with their own teacher!
>
> 3. Women turn to homosexuality because of impotent men.

While this may be true for some women, they would be considered bisexual. As with homosexual men, most actual lesbians develop their sexual orientation at a very young age.

Besides her quoting of Prabhupada's "controversial" statements, Abhi Mudra also posits a peculiar take on Vaishnava theology. First she quotes Prabhupada, and then gives some exposition:

> Shrila Prabhupada explains in Bhagavad Gita As It Is, (Intro):
>
> > The living entity is explained as the superior prakrti. Prakrti is always under control, whether inferior or superior. Prakrti is female, and she is controlled by the Lord just as the activities of a wife are controlled by the husband. Prakrti is always subordinate, predominated by the Lord, who is the predominator. The living entities and material nature are both predominated, controlled by the Supreme Lord. According to the Gita, the living entities, although parts and parcels of the Supreme Lord, are to be considered prakrti. This is clearly mentioned in the Seventh Chapter, fifth verse of Bhagavad-gita:

apareyam itas tv anyam prakritim
viddhi me param
jiva-bhutam maha-baho yayedam
dharyate jagat

"Besides this inferior nature, O mighty-armed Arjuna, there is a superior energy of Mine, which are all living entities who are struggling with material nature and are sustaining the universe."

Therefore, the attempt of any living entity to try to enjoy another living entities equals spiritual homosexuality.

Because Prabhupada described prakriti as female, and that souls are by nature prakriti in relation to God who Prabhupada described as the male purusha, therefore Abhi Mudra Dasi reasoned that for human souls to try to enjoy a sexual relationship is actually "spiritual homosexuality."

I can't really blame Abhi Mudra for her conclusion, she is a simple Prabhupada fanatic who takes everything he ever said as literally the perfect words of God's most perfect revelation. So because Prabhupada said that prakriti is female, and jivatmas (souls) are prakriti, it doesn't take far to reason that all souls are female and therefore all relationships are in fact spiritual lesbianism.

The problem is how Prabhupada described prakriti as female and purusha as male. Krishna says in the Gita:

Prakrtyaiva ca karmani kriyamanani sarvasah – All activities taking place, in all respects, are performed by prakriti – *yah pasyati tathatmanam* – who also sees the atma – *akarttaram* – is not the doer – *sa pasyati* – he sees.

Prakriti is a word that refers to the substance comprising everything God controls, God's self-same primeval energy. It is used to refer to the

substance of the jiva (soul) and to everything else God controls which comprises everything and anything in existence, e.g. which could also be called matter in it’s fundamental form (atomic or subatomic particles/waves):

> **prakRti** f. `” making or placing before or at first “‘ , the original or natural form or condition of anything , original or primary substance (opp. to %{vi-kRti} q.v.) Pra1t. Nir. Jaim. MBh. ; cause original source Mn. MBh. Sak. &c. ; origin , extraction Mricch. ; nature , character , constitution , temper , disposition MBh. Ka1v. Susr. &c. (ibc. and %{-tyA} ind. by nature , naturally , unalterably , properly Pra1t. SrS. Mn. &c.) ; fundamental form , pattern , standard , model , rule (esp. in ritual) SrS. ; (in the Samkhya phil.) the original producer of (or rather passive power of creating) the material world (consisting of 3 constituent essences or Gunas called %{sattva} , %{rajas} and %{tamas}) , Nature (distinguished from %{puruSa} , Spirit as Maya is indistinguished from Brahman in the Vedantas) ; pl. the 8 producers or primary essences which evolve the whole visible world (viz. %{a-vyakta} , %{buddhi} or %{mahat} , %{ahaM-kAra} , and the 5 %{tan-mAtras} or subtle elements ; rarely the 5 elements alone) IW. 80 &c. ; (in mythol.) a goddess , the personified will of the Supreme in the creation (hence the same with the Sakti or personified energy or wife of a deity , as Lakshmi , Durga etc. ; also considered as identical with the Supreme Being) W. IW. 140 RTL. 223 ; (pl.) N. of a class of deities under Manu Raibhya Hariv. ; (in polit.) pl. a king’s ministers , the body of ministers or counselors , ministry Mn. MBh. &c. ; the subjects of a king , citizens , artisans &c. ib. ; the constituent elements or powers of the state (of which are usually enumerated , viz. king minister , allies , treasure , army

, territory , fortresses Mn. ix , 294 ; 295) ; the various sovereigns to be considered in case of war (viz. the %{madhyama} , %{vijigISu} , %{udAsIna} and %{zatru} ; to which should be added 8 remoter princes , viz. the %{mitra} , %{arimitra} , %{mitra-mitra} , %{arimitra-mitra} , %{pArSNi-graha} , %{Akranda} , %{pArSNigrAhAsAra} , %{AkrandAsAsa} ; each of these 12 kings has 5 Prakritis in the form of minister , territory , fortresses , treasure and army , so that the total number of Prakritis may be 72) Mn. vii , 155 ; 157 Kull. ; (in gram.) the crude or elementary form of a word , base , root , an uninflected word Sah. Pan. Sch. Vop. ; N. of 2 classes of metres Col. ; (in arithm.) a co-efficient multiplier ib. ; (in anat.) temperament , the predominance of one of the humours at the time of generation W. ; (with %{tritIyA}) the third nature , a eunuch MBh. ; matter , affair Lalit. ; the male or female organ of generation L. ; a woman or womankind L. ; a mother L. ; an animal L. ; N. of a woman Buddh. ; N. of wk.

In shastra (scripture) the word prakriti and shakti is used for God’s energy, and they both have a feminine connotation. Also God is referred to as purusha and shaktiman, which have male connotations. But not because everything and everyone but God is a female. They are metaphors.

Prabhupada either misunderstood or purposely misinterpreted what shastra teaches about prakriti as feminine and purusha as masculine. It’s easy to conclude from the way he taught about these concepts that the jiva souls are literally female. Purusha or shaktiman is the taught as the controlling aspect of God and reality; prakriti or shakti is taught as the controlled aspect of God or reality. So the idea of relaying those ideas in gender terms is because men are more powerful than women, that’s all. It’s semantics, not literal truth.

The controlling aspect of God is given a masculine etymology, and the

controlled aspect a feminine one. That isn't meant to literally suggest that God is literally only male and that jivas are all literally only female; or that if jivas see themselves as male that they are deluded. Was Arjuna or the rest of males in Krishna lila in reality actually females? Are they all deluded?

God's energy is not literally female. Gender metaphors are used to just indicate that to be self-realized we need to understand that we are controlled and God is the controller. Not that we are all female and God is the only male.

Radha is also God, yet she is the supreme controller, she is Krishna as a female. The gopas or Krishna's friends in Dwaraka are eternally male, yet they are still considered shakti and prakriti. Raghava Goswami (an intimate associate of Sri Chaitanya) wrote in his Sri Krsna-bhakti-ratna Prakasa

> Because Shri Shri Radha-Krishna are not different and because Shri Krishna is the master of all potencies, therefore Shri Radha is also the master and source of all potencies. He is by nature full of sweetness and bliss, free from the three modes, and eternally manifest beyond the material nature. Because Radha is not different from Him, so is She also. It is said that within the Lord are all potencies, the modes, and the material nature.

From the *Narada Pancaratra — Sri Radha Sahasranama*:

> isvari sarva-vandya ca
> gopaniya subhankari
> palini sarva-bhutanam
> tatha kamanga-harini
>
> She is the supreme controller (isvari), worshiped by all (sarva-vandya), reclusive (gopaniya), the giver of auspiciousness (subhankari), the protectress of all

> living entities (palini sarva-bhutanam), and the wife of Lord Siva who destroyed Kamadeva's body (kamanga-harini).

Jiva Goswami's commentary to Brahma-Samhita:

> In the Sammohana Tantra, Durga herself declares:
>
> I am Durga. I possess all virtues. I am not different from Sri Radha, the eternal, supreme goddess of fortune.
>
> She is identical with Gokula's queen Sri Radha, who possesses a great treasure of love for Krishna. By her grace the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the master of all living entities, is easily understood.
>
> Sometimes Goddess Durga is also described as the supreme controller. This is also correct because there is no difference between the potencies and Lord Krishna, the master of all potencies. This is confirmed by the following words of the Gautamiya Tantra:
>
> Krishna is Durga. Durga is Krishna. One who sees that they are different will not become liberated from the cycle of repeated birth and death.

So the conception of "spiritual homosexuality" that Abhi Mudra Dasi garnered from Prabhupada, based on his teaching that prakriti is female, is in error. Jiva souls having a sexual relationship are not inherently all having a homosexual relationship.

Abhi Mudra's other misconceptions in her article are so ridiculous and many in number, that I'm only going to mention one more that really stuck out as hilariously foolish. If you want to discuss the rest of the madness feel free in the comments:

> A chaste woman who is satisfied in her relationship has

> an inclination to have sex only once a month after her menstrual cycle. This desire naturally leads to pregnancy.
>
> Men who refuse to be regulated in this way go astray of their families by indulging in unrestricted sex with prostitutes. Overindulgence in sex causes severe physical weakness and ultimately leads to impotency and homosexuality. Women are always the followers of men and their reaction to the perverted behavior of men is that they also become lesbians

The tile of this post is *Does Dandavats.com Consider Prabhupada A Laughingstock?* I chose that because the article by Abhi Mudra doesn't appear on their website if you go there (at the time of this writing) yet did appear on their feed to Planet ISKCON. It made me wonder if it originally appeared on Dandavats front page as a new post, but was then removed out of embarrassment for the "controversial" statements Prabhupada is quoted as saying, and over embarrassment over the crazy lady ranting crazily about crazy stuff, who was clearly inspired by Prabhupada.

On many fronts ISKCON is trying to present a less controversial or crazy version of "The Hare Krishna's" then what many devotees would like. Many Prabhupada fanatics like to present Prabhupada's "controversial" statements on a regular basis as if they are God's words from on high, as if to reject them is done at your own foolish peril. They will go on and on presenting Prabhupada's ignorant ramblings as the "message of Krishna," as if to accept anything else is a sign of a lack of faith in Krishna, and in Prabhupada as a perfect God inspired super-being. How long will the leaders of ISKCON tolerate that type of demagoguery? How many see a problem but are too afraid to speak out? How many will sacrifice a public perception for ISKCON acceptance as a "Prabhupada man?" How many will be content with being seen as laughingstocks to the average person?

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Addendum

In the following list which I quote throughout the book you will see a sampling of "controversial" statements by the founder of ISKCON A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Often he tries to back up his statements by claiming they are based on Vedic [Hindu] scriptural authority. For example you will see that he claims that in the Bhagavad-Gita [The "Hindu Bible"] Krishna states that women are inherently “low-born” or “of sinful birth.” I write about what has been the traditional translation of that verse here. There we see that by changing the grammar the traditional understanding and interpretation is lost.

1. His Views Promoting Violence and Killing People to Attain His Goals

2. His Views Promoting Racism and Slavery

3. His Support of Homophobia

4. His Views Concerning Women

5. His Views Concerning Women’s Education

6. His Views Supporting Dictatorship as a Preferred Form of Governance

7. His Views Promoting the “Moon Landing Hoax” Conspiracy Theory and Related Cosmological Vision

8. His Views Promoting the Idea that Women Enjoy Being Raped

His Views Promoting Violence and Killing People to Attain His Goals

Morning Walk — January 21, 1976, Mayapura

Prabhupāda: Still, if you say, “You are mūḍha,” they become angry. Such mūḍhas, rascals, they are in the government service. And if you say that “You are mūḍhas,” he becomes angry. Upadeśo hi mūrkhāṇāṁ prakopāya na śāntaye: “If a mūḍha is advised nice instruction, he becomes angry.” He does not take it. Payaḥ-pānaṁ bhujaṅgānāṁ kevalaṁ viṣa-vardhanam: “If you give milk and banana to a snake, you simply increase his poison.” One day he will come-(growls). You see? “I have given you milk and you…” “Yes, that is my nature. Yes. You give me milk, and I am prepared to kill you.” This is mūḍha. We have to kill this civilization of mūḍhas. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām [Bg. 4.8]. Those who are actually human being, you have to give them Kṛṣṇa. And those who are mūḍhas, we have to kill them. This is our business. Kill all the mūḍhas and give Kṛṣṇa to the sane man. Yes. That will prove that you are really Kṛṣṇa’s. We are not nonviolent. We are violent to the mūḍhas.

Room Conversation — February 25, 1977, Mayapura

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Gradually some of the people are beginning to understand what you’re up to, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Some of these big demons in America especially, they are beginning to understand that you are the most dangerous personality in the world to them.

Prabhupāda: To kill “demon-crazy,” LSD. (laughs) Yes, that is my mission. That is Kṛṣṇa’s mission, paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām BG 4.8 , to kill all these demons, crazy demons. I have no such power; otherwise I would have killed them. Either establish Kṛṣṇa conscious government or kill them- bas, finish. I would have done that, violence.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Yes, when good argument fails…

Prabhupāda: Kill them. Finish. Just like Paraśurāma did. Kill all them, twenty-one times.

Morning Walk — March 15, 1974, Vrndavana

Prabhupāda: Arcye viṣṇau… [break] …when it will teach military art, with tilaka, soldiers will, “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa…” (laughter) We want that. Marching with military band, “Hare Kṛṣṇa.” You maintain this idea. Is it not good?

Hṛdayānanda: Yes, Prabhupāda.

Prabhupāda: When there will be military march of Kṛṣṇa conscious soldiers. Anyone who does not believe in Kṛṣṇa, “Blam!” (laughter) Yes. The same process as the Mohammedans did, with sword and Koran, we’ll have to do that. “Do you believe in Kṛṣṇa or not?” “No, sir.” “Blam!” Finished. (laughter, Prabhupāda laughs) What do you think, Madhudviṣa Mahārāja? Is that all right?

Madhudviṣa: Yes.

Prabhupāda: (laughing) What these communists can do? We can do better than them. We can kill many communists like that. (laughter) Then it will be counteraction of communist movement. And you think like that. “Why you are sitting idly, no employment? Come on to the field! Take this plow! Take this bull. Go on working. Why you are sitting idly?” This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Nobody should be allowed to sit down and sleep.

Letter to Satyabhama — Los Angeles 27 December, 1968 [While not directly about physical violence, this next letter shows how he told his followers to send their very young children far away to boarding schools to be indoctrinated into serving his plans for the expansion of his organization. He insisted that the schools were only allowed to teach from his books, which are religious texts, not school texts.]

Prabhupada: Now you can do the needful and make arrangements to start the school immediately. If you take charge of the children of our devotees and give them nice education strictly on Krishna Consciousness principles, it will be a great help to the preachers, just like our six students, husbands and wives, who are preaching in London. One of them has got a child and as soon as she is at least two years old, she may be sent under your care. New Vrindaban is just the suitable place for keeping cows and children. It will be an ideal residential quarter, completely for spiritual life and I hope for the future the Americans must evaluate this enterprise as very very valuable.

Room conversation — April 19, 1977, Bombay

Prabhupada: That's all. Murkhasya lakutausadhi(?). When a person is fool number one, beat him. That's all. Dhol gobara...(?) Tulasi dasa has said, dhol gobara sudra pasu nari, ei saba sasana ke adhikari. Dhol, drum, you have to bring it to the tune by beating, "tung, tung." Gobara. Gobara means fool person. Pasu, animal. Dhol, gobara, pa..., sudra, and nari, woman. They should be punished to bring them into order. Ei saba sasana ke adhikari. Otherwise they will spoil. A barking dog, you cannot pacify him, "My dear dog, don't bark." It will disturb him: "No!" Dhol gobara sudra pasu nari, ei saba sasana ke... So anyone who is denying the existence of God, he is a rascal number one and beat him with shoes. Bas. He is being beaten with shoes by nature.

Conversation — New York April 12, 1969

Prabhupāda: Yes. That is Tulasī dāsa's remark. So in many passages of his poetry he has not done very justice to woman. And another poetry, he writes, dhol guṇār śūdra narī. Dhol guṇār śūdra narī ihe sab śaśan ke adhikārī. (?) Dhol guṇār paśu śūdra narī, ihe sab śaśan ke adhikārī. Dhol, dhol means drum, mṛdaṅga. Gunar, guṇār means... What is called English? A fool, fool. Illiterate fool, what is one word?

Brahmānanda: Buffoon?

Prabhupāda: Maybe buffoon. Buffoon is sometimes troublesome. But

guṇār means he doesn’t understand very nicely.

Brahmānanda: Dullard.

Prabhupāda: Dull, dull. Dhol guṇār, dhol means drum and guṇār means dull. Śūdra, and the laborer class. Three. Dhol, guṇār, śūdra, and paśu, household animals, just like cows, dogs.

Brahmānanda: Pet.

Prabhupāda: Pet, like that. Dhol guṇār śūdra paśu and narī. Nari means woman. (laughs) Just see. He has classified the narī amongst these class, dhol, guṇār, śūdra, paśu, narī. Ihe sab śaśan ke adhikārī. Sasan ke adhikārī means all these are subjected for punishment. And what about the guest?

Govinda dāsī: Oh, the guest? It’s coming.

Prabhupāda: So śaśan ke adhikārī means they should be punished. (laughs) Punished means, just like dhol, when the, I mean to say, sound is not very hard, dag-dag, if you beat it on the border, then it comes to be nice tune. Similarly, paśu, animals, if you request, “My dear dog, please do not go there.” Hut! (laughter) “No, my dear dog.” Hut! This is the way.(?) Similarly, woman. If you become lenient, then she will be troublesome. So in India still, in villages, whenever there is some quarrel between husband wife, the husband beats and she is tamed. (laughs) In civilized society, “Oh, you have done this?” Immediately some criminal case. But in uncivilized society they don’t care for court or civilized way of...

His Views Promoting Racism and Slavery

Room Conversation Varnasrama System Must Be Introduced — February 14, 1977, Mayapura

Prabhupada: Sudra is to be controlled only. They are never given to be freedom. Just like in America. The blacks were slaves. They were under control. And since you have given them equal rights they are disturbing, most disturbing, always creating a fearful situation, uncultured and

drunkards. What training they have got? They have got equal right? That is best, to keep them under control as slaves but give them sufficient food, sufficient cloth, not more than that. Then they will be satisfied.

SB 4.14.45, purport

It is said in the sastras that the head of the body represents the brahmanas, the arms represent the ksatriyas, the abdomen represents the vaisyas, and the legs, beginning with the thighs, represent the sudras. The sudras are sometimes called black, or krsna. The brahmanas are called sukla, or white, and the ksatriyas and the vaisyas are a mixture of black and white. However, those who are extraordinarily white are said to have skin produced out of white leprosy. It may be concluded that white or a golden hue is the color of the higher caste, and black is the complexion of the sudras.

BG 2.7-11, New York, March 2, 1966

Professor Einstein, he was living here in America. He was a German Jew, and I think he was living in America. He was a great student of this Bhagavad-gita. Hitler. Hitler was a great student of Bhagavad-gita.

Letter to: Satsvarupa, San Francisco 9 April, 1968

Certainly we are not going to say these things about the negro people publicly; we have no distinction between black or white, or demon or demigod, but at the same time, so long as one is demon or demigod, we have to behave in the proper way. Just like Caitanya Mahaprabhu; He had no distinction between a tiger and a man. He was so powerful that He could convert even a tiger to dance. But so far as we are concerned, we should not imitate and go to some tiger and try to make him dance! But still, tiger is equally eligible like a man. So, you can understand that these

talks are not for the public, as they have not got the ability to understand. Basically we have not got hatred for anyone, but when one is demoniac or atheistic, we should try to avoid their company. A preacher's business is to love God, to make friendship with devotees, to enlighten the innocent, and to avoid the demons. This principle we shall follow. But in higher devotional life, there is no such distinction.

Talk Before Class, November 29, 1968, Los Angeles

I think in our apartment also somebody must remain. Here this is... In New York also I lost my typewriter, tape recorder. In 72nd St. at daytime, at nine o'clock. I went to take my meals in Dr. Misra's place at about nine, and when I came back I saw the door is broken. That superintendent, he was a Negro. He has done, I know that. This is very common case here.

Conversation with Bajaj and Bhusan, September 11, 1972, Arlington, Texas

Prabhupada: Yes. Janmastami, Krishna's birthday, is observed by every Indian still, although artificially they are being checked not to take to Krishna. Krishna is presented by government in so many bad way. You see? In government there is a paper. It is called "Indian Culture," something. In that paper Krishna is depicted as a "Bil Boy." (?)
Guest (3): What?
Prabhupada: "Bil Boy" means just like black, Negro. And He is worshiped. Such a rascal. Krishna is worshiped, and for Krishna worship so many Vedic literature, and government is presenting Him as "Bil Boy." Just see what kind of government we have got.

SB 1.16.4, Los Angeles, January 1, 1974

So here, this man was cheating. Because here it is said: nrpa-linga-dharam. He was dressed like a king. Just like king is very gorgeously

dressed. But his bodily feature, he was a black man. The black man means sudra.

Room Conversation, October 5, 1975, Mauritius

This is Vedic civilization: plain living, high thinking. And poor thinking, poor in thought, poor in behavior, and living with motorcar and this, that, nonsense. It is all nonsense civilization. A first-class Rolls Royce car, and who is sitting there? A third-class negro. This is going on. YouÆll find these things in Europe and America. This is going on. A first-class car and a third-class negro. ThatÆs all. Is it not?

Sannyasa Initiation, Bombay, November 18, 1975

You have got good opportunity. You are going to Africa to deliver these persons. Sukadeva Gosvami says, kirata-hunandhra-pulinda-pulkasa abhira-sumbha yavanah khasadayah, ye 'nye ca papa [SB 2.4.18]. These groups of men are considered very fallen, kirata, the black men. They are called nisada. Nisada was born of Vena, King Vena. So they are habituated to steal; therefore they have been given a separate place, African jungles. That is there in the Bhagavatam. So, but everyone can be delivered. Kirata-hunandhra-pulinda-pulkasa abhira-sumbha yavanah khasadayah ye 'nye ca papa.These are known (as) sinful life.

Discussion with Syamasundara dasa about John Dewey, 1976

Sudras have no brain. In America also, the whole America once belonged to the Red Indians. Why they could not improve? The land was there. Why these foreigners, the Europeans, came and improved? So sudras cannot do this. They cannot make any correction.

Morning Walk, January 22-23, 1976, Mayapura

Yes. That... One, our Sanskrit professor used to... "My dear boys, even there is beauty amongst the negroes." He used to say. And it is my... It is one's eye that she is very beautiful. It does not recommend others' recommendation. Yar sange ye morje man kibari ki vardana. It doesn't matter whether she low caste or high caste; if she is attractive, then it is all right. Therefore rupavati bharya satruh. Canakya Pandita's instruction are very, very nice. You know my story? My father's instruction? Yes.

BG 9.3, Melbourne, April 21, 1976

So on the whole, the conclusion is that the Aryans spread in Europe also, and the Americans, they also spread from Europe. So the intelligent class of human being, they belong to the Aryans, Aryan family. Just like Hitler claimed that he belonged to the Aryan family. Of course, they belonged to the Aryan families.

Room Conversation, August 2, 1976, New Mayapur, French farm

Prabhupada: In Bengal the, just like here, so many, black mixed up with white. In Bengal and Madras, so many Dravidian have been mixed up with the Aryan. Therefore in Bengal and Madras you'll find many black.
Hari-sauri: Dravidian?
Prabhupada: Dravidian culture. Dravida. They are non-Aryans. Just like these Africans, they are not Aryans. Now they are mixing up with Europeans and Americans. In India, it was, one from the higher section, brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya, they will be fair complexion. Sudras, black. So if a brahmana becomes black, then heÆs not accepted as brahmana. Kala bahu. And if a sudra becomes fair, then heÆs to be know that heÆs not pure sudra. Although we do not take very, but, this brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya, by birth, but still, we have seen, those who are coming purely from high caste family, their behavior and sudras behavior is different. The family culture. And the spiritual culture lost, still, the family culture keeps them separate.

Room Conversation, August 10, 1976, Tehran

Jnanagamya: Great books have done this. Uncle Tom's Cabin started a whole war against slavery in the United states. Books and films are very potent. They can make public opinion.

Prabhupada: Books are different thing, we are publishing.

Jnanagamya: In America the Negro situation was very bad, and they made many films showing heroic Negroes and now the situation is much better. The people are not so much agitated by seeing Negroes. They think "Oh, now a Negro has some good qualities." Because of these films they have come to appreciate. So like that, if a devotee is a hero they will also appreciate.

Prabhupada: Do they? I don't appreciate. I don't think the Negro question is solved.

Jnanagamya: No, it's not, but it is making steps to that end.

Prabhupada: The whites, they do not like the Negroes still. Wherever there are Negroes, in that quarter the whites do not go in. So is it not? They do not go. Although they have been given equal right, but at heart the whites, they do not like it. Is there any improvement? I don't think. Officially, "Yes, yes, you are good, I am good."

Nava-yauvana: Because people are still on the bodily conception of life, so they are...

Prabhupada: Yes. That is the real disease. So long one is situated in the bodily concept of life, he is animal. First of all, you have to educate them. That is the difficulty.

Jnanagamya: But we are not Negroes. We are actually devotees and we are very attractive, and we have all good qualities, and people do not have to be afraid to come into our section of town. We will not kill them. That is why they are afraid of the Negroes. So we actually have good things to offer.

Conversation on Train to Allahabad, January 11, 1977, India

Ramesvara: In regards to brainwashing, they claim that our life-style tends to take the devotee and isolate him from the world.
Prabhupada: Yes. We hate to mix with you. No gentleman tries to mix with loafers. In England still, the rich quarter is different from the poor quarter. Is it not?
Hari-sauri: Not so much. It was though, formerly, very strongly.
Prabhupada: Yes. Aristocratic will never live... Even in America, they donÆt like to live with the blacks.
Ramesvara: No.
Prabhupada: (aside:) That child...? So that separation... Crows will not like to live with the ducks and white swans. And white swans will not like to live with the crows. That is natural division. "Birds of the same feather flock together."
Jagadisa: And honest men donÆt like to associate with thieves and criminals.
Prabhupada: Yes, that is natural. We are not interested even with these daily newspapers. We are interested Bhagavad-gita. We donÆt keep any news. We know the dogs are barking. ThatÆs all. But that does not mean we have to mix with the dogs.

Room Conversation, January 21, 1977, Bhuvanesvara

Ramesvara: ThatÆs the trend, then, everywhere, because unemployment is increasing.
Prabhupada: And especially in your country it will be dangerous because these blacks, if they donÆt get employment, they will create havoc, these blacks. And they are not civilized. They want money, and if they donÆt get money, then they will create havoc.
Gargamuni: Money and liquor.
Hari-sauri: Yes. If they do get money, they just buy it.

Morning Walk, November 20, 1975, Bombay

Dr. Patel: When he... On the cross they say he uttered, "Father, donÆt forsake me." That is the time he went into trance most probably. Eh? He must have gone in trance when he uttered the last words, "Father, donÆt forsake me." And then when he was brought down in the lap of his mother and they took him in the cave, no? Under the guard of those Italian soldiers. Then there was a big hurricane or something like that and they all ran away. And after that he was smuggled away from that place. Christ has rebuilt his fatherÆs temple in true sense, the way he spread the Christianity. The churches have degenerated in his teaching, unfortunately. It is the church. That happens with every, in every, I mean, these things, teachings. Race, this race is very bold, indeed, that God choicest race, these Jews, somehow or other.

Prabhupada: Jews?

Dr. Patel: Really, it is GodÆs choicest race. (laughter) They have produced wonderful people right from Christ up to Professor Einstein, very bold people, very bold indeed. They are truthful to their convictions. They would die for their convictions but they will not, I mean, budge an inch.

Brahmananda: But theyÆre impersonalists.

Dr. Patel: Very brave. Very brave race.

Brahmananda: They are impersonalists.

Dr. Patel: Today still, those people really very brave. Very brave. It is the choicest race from God. ItÆs a fact.

Prabhupada: Brahmananda is very much pleased. (laughter)

Dr. Patel: I donÆt know who are they, but that is a fact. When you look back to the history, itÆs the really choicest race.

Yasomatinandana: Giriraja is also from.

Dr. Patel: Whatever he may be. I donÆt know them, who are they. But historically we look back. They are really very brave people. They have died for the sake of their principle. Never budge an inch.

Brahmananda: But they are impersonalists.

Dr. Patel: Impersonalist or personalist is immaterial. (laughter) I mean I talk of boldness, very bold people. Truthful to their conviction. Truthful to their conviction, sir.

Prabhupada: They are so bold that, Shylock?

Brahmananda: Yeah, yeah, the flesh.
Dr. Patel: There are Shylocks everywhere. One Shylock does not mean a bad race. And that Shylock is the creation of that poet.
Prabhupada: No, the... In Europe the Jews are treated like that.
Dr. Patel: Are there not Shylocks in...
Prabhupada: And they are greatest scientist.
Dr. Patel: All the Marwaris, who are they? They are Shylocks. And they give you lot of money and you make them sit first before us, you know.
Prabhupada: Hare Krishna.
Dr. Patel: I am... Don't say that. [break]

Conversation During Massage, January 23, 1977, Bhuvanesvara

Ramesvara: It's also commonly known that in the West the banks supplied money to Lenin to fight his revolution. They have no discrimination. If it seems like it is a good chance for making interest...
Prabhupada: Therefore Hitler killed these Jews. They were financing against Germany. Otherwise he had no enmity with the Jews.
Hari-sauri: Yes. They were controlling the economy. That was his one thing.
Prabhupada: And they were supplying. They want interest money — "Never mind against our country." Therefore Hitler decided, "Kill all the Jews."
Ramesvara:: These banks in the West, they supported Lenin. They made it possible to finance his revolution.
Prabhupada: Yes. They have got money. The Jews have got money. They want to invest and get some profit. Their only interest is how to get money, no nationalism, no religion, nothing of the sort. Therefore it is not now; long, long ago... Therefore Shakespeare wrote "Shylock, the Jew."
Hari-sauri: Yes. "Shylock."
Prabhupada: "One pound of flesh." The Jews were criticized long, long ago.
Hari-sauri: They were hated in the Middle Ages.

His Support of Homophobia

SB 3.20.26, purport

It appears here that the homosexual appetite of males for each other is created in this episode of the creation of the demons by Brahma. In other words, the homosexual appetite of a man for another man is demoniac and is not for any sane male in the ordinary course of life.

Room Conversation, August 25, 1971, London

These rascals should understand that they have created problem on account of their animalistic, less than animalistic civilization. There is no limit of sense gratification. The sense gratification, homosex, they are supporting. Just see. Just see. At least, in animal society there is no homosex. They have created homosex, and that is being passed by the priest, the religious heads. You know that?

Talk with Bob Cohen, February 27-29, 1972, Mayapura

Prabhupada: No, the idea is that marriage is not sacred. They think marriage is a legalized prostitution. They think like that, but marriage is not that. Even that Christian paper, what is that, "Watch...?"
Syamasundara: Christian..."Watchtower?"
Prabhupada: "Watchtower." It has criticized, one priest has allowed the marriage between man to man, homosex. So these things are going on. They take it purely for prostitution. That's all. So therefore people are thinking, "What is the use of keeping a regular prostitution at a cost of heavy expenditure? Better not to have this."

Conversation with the GBC, May 25, 1972, Los Angeles

Prabhupada: Now the priestly order supporting homosex. I was

surprised. They are going to pass resolution for getting married between man to man. The human society has come down to such a degraded position. It is astonishing. When I heard from Kirtanananda Maharaja there is a big conference for passing this resolution. In India still, if there somebody hears about homosex (makes sound of breathing out). Homosex is there but nobody will support publicly. (indistinct) People are going down and this is the subject matter for priestly order? It may be subject matter for the legislator, priestly order, they are discussing for one week. Just imagine. Phalena pariciyate, one has to study by the result. Not that superficially you show that "We are very much advanced." What is the result? Phalena pariciyate, your, that is in English word also, end justifies the means. The end is this (indistinct) "We are going to support homosex." Getting married. There are many cases the priestly order has actually got married. I read it in that paper, Watch, what is called?

Devotees: Watchtower.

Prabhupada: Watchtower. They have complained(?). So we have nothing to (indistinct) them. The world is degrading to the lowest status, even less than animal. The animal also do not support homosex. They have never sex life between male to male. They are less than animal. People are becoming less than animal. This is all due to godlessness.

Morning Walk, September 28, 1972, Los Angeles

Jayatirtha: Ordained priests, they have left and gone off to marry or whatever. Especially they are concerned that they can't marry. Catholic priests are not allowed to marry.

Prabhupada: Marrying? They are marrying man to man ,what to speak of marrying. Sodomy.

Jayatirtha: So that's the alternative. Either they're leaving or they're marrying man to man.

Prabhupada: Homosex. They are supporting homosex. So degraded, and still they say, "What we have done?" They do not know what is degradation, and they are priest. They are teaching others. They do not know what is the meaning of degradation.

Svarupa Damodara: So if the leader is degraded, how can the followers...
Prabhupada: Similarly, scientists, they do not know what is imperfection, and they are scientists.
Devotee (2): The thing about the blind leading the blind.

Morning Walk, December 8, 1973, Los Angeles

Yasomatinandana: These Christians are very blasphemous.
Prajapati: Very blasphemous.
Prabhupada: Yes.
Karandhara: Party spirit.
Prabhupada: No no, what is their value? When they are sanctioning abortion, homosex, now they are finished. They have no value.
Karandhara: Well, most or a greater proportion of the traditional Christians condemn homosex and abortion. A good quantity of the traditional Christians, they condemn abortion and homosex.
Prabhupada: Yes, they are good, but mostly, as you were telling me that, that Pope is disgusted... Yes. Nobody cares for the Bible or the Pope. That is everywhere, not only Christian. Actually there is no religion at the present moment. All animals. We don't blame only the Christians. The Hindus, Muslim, everyone. They have lost all religion.

Morning Walk, April 2, 1975, Mayapur

Prabhupada: These so-called Christians. They say that "We are very weak. We can not restrain ourself from sinful activities, so we believe in Christ, and he has taken contract for suffering." That's all.
Trivikrama: "So let us go on sinning."
Prabhupada: Yes.
Pancadravida: Kill him again.
Prabhupada: Yes. This is their philosophy. And as they pass laws in the Parliament, similarly, these churches approve: "Yes, homosex is all right."

Then it is all right. This cheating system is going on. Similar cheating system is the Hindus also. You'll find in Calcutta, in College Street, so many butcher house. And they have kept one goddess Kali that "We are eating Mother Kali's prasada." That's it. This is going on.

Morning Walk, May 9, 1975, Perth

Now they are indulging homosex, how they will become strong? And the students, they are discussing, that means they are having. The stamina is being lost. Now what they have created, it will be lost.

Morning Walk, May 11, 1975, Perth

So generally, people are suffering on account of association with tamo-guna and rajo-guna, and, whole material world, mostly and few of them in rajo-guna. The symptoms of rajo-guna and tamo-guna are lust and greediness. Just like yesterday you told me the students are talking about homosex. That means tamo-guna, that the education-students, they are discussing about homosex. That means tamo-guna, lusty desires, very prominent, and how to fulfill, by homosex or sex with woman. This is their subject matter, kama. So everyone in this material world infected with this tamo-guna, all lusty desires, in various ways, varieties. And some of them in rajo-guna politics and improvement of material condition.

Morning Walk, May 11, 1975, Perth

The dog and cat they are having sex on the open street, and now they are talking of homosex in the school, colleges for education. This is their position. They do not know even what is the standard of human civilization.

Morning Walk, May 13, 1975, Perth

Our difficulty: the so-called swamis, priests, popes, they are also in the pravrtti-marga. All these, priests, and they have illicit sex. Pravrtti-marga. So they are passing, "Yes, you can have homosex with man." They are getting man-to-man marriage. You know? They are performing the marriage ceremony between man to man in the open church. What class of men they are? And they are priest. Just see. Such degraded persons, drinking... They have got hospital for curing their drinking disease. Five thousand patients in a hospital in America, all drunkards, and they are priest. Just see.

Morning Walk, May 13, 1975, Perth

Paramahamsa: They also have that "Thou shalt not commit adultery."
Prabhupada: Yes. And they are very expert in doing that. That is advanced civilization. Now they are marrying man to man and accepting homosex, so what is the value now of this priestly class?

Morning Walk, May 14, 1975, Perth

Prabhupada: Fourth-class men.
Amogha: Yeah.
Prabhupada: They are discussing in the university homosex. They are advanced. Advancement of education. Just see. They are not even fourth-class men; they are animals, producing so many animals, that's all, dogs and hogs. [break] ...in the beginning samah. Samah, damah— first two business. Control the sense and keep the mind undisturbed. That is the beginning. Now they are so much sexually disturbed, they're discussing about the profit of homosex. Where is first-class men?
Amogha: They say that homosex keeps the balance of things because...
Prabhupada: Yes, fourth-class man can say anything wrong, bad, but we are not going to hear of it. A fourth-class man's philosophy, we will have to waste our time to hear them — that's not good. They are not even fourth class; they are animal class. Fourth class has got some position, but they are naradhama, the lowest of the mankind. So what is their philosophy,

and who is going to spoil his time to hear about their philosophy?

Morning Walk, May 21, 1975, Melbourne

That means they are gliding down towards hell, that's all. Yositam sangi-sangam. Now they are coming to the platform of homosex. This is their advancement, spiritual advancement. Yositam sangi-sangam. This is Coca-cola, everywhere.

Room Conversation with Director of Research of the Dept. of Social Welfare, May 21, 1975, Melbourne

Prabhupada: No. There is no question of high percentage. I said that even a small percentage, there must be some ideal men. At least people will see that here is the ideal man. Just like we are having. Because they are chanting and dancing, many outsiders are coming and they are also learning, they are also offering obeisances. And gradually they are offering their service: "Please accept me." The example is better than precept. If you have an ideal group of men, then people will automatically learn. That is wanted. But don't mind, I don't find any ideal group of men. Even in the priests they are going to hospital for their drinking habit. I saw in sometimes before in a hospital, five thousand patients, alcoholic patients, priest. Priest should be ideal character. And they are advocating homosex. So where is the ideal character men? If the priestly class they are going to hospital for drinking habit, and they are allowing man-to-man marriage and homosex, then where is ideal character?
Director: But homosexual is a sickness.
Devotee: He said it's an illness.
Director: It's an illness. It's just like a person can't see, you would punish him for not seeing. You can't punish a person for being homosexual. That our society says.
Prabhupada: Well, anyway, the priestly class, sanctioning homosex.
Director: Pardon?
Prabhupada: Sanctioning. They are allowing homosex. And there was

report that man and man was married by the priest. In New York there is a paper, Watchtower. That is a Christian paper. I have seen in that paper. They are condemning it, that priest is allowing man-to-man marriage. And they are passing resolution, homosex is passed, "All right." And in Perth you said that the students are discussing about homosex, in favor of homosex. So where is the ideal character? If you want something tangible business, train some people to become ideal character. That is this Krishna consciousness movement.

Letter to: Lalitananda, Hawaii 26 May, 1975

I am very sorry that you have taken to homosex. It will not help you advance in your attempt for spiritual life. In fact, it will only hamper your advancement. I do not know why you have taken to such abominable activities. What can I say? Anyway, try to render whatever service you can to Krishna. Even though you are in a very degraded condition Krishna, being pleased with your service attitude, can pick you up from your fallen state. You should stop this homosex immediately. It is illicit sex, otherwise, your chances of advancing in spiritual life are nil. Show Krishna you are serious, if you are.

Morning Walk, May 28, 1975, Honolulu

Prabhupada: Yes. So what is the use of their church and preaching?
Devotee: Well, we want to tell the others so they can also be saved.
Prabhupada: No, the Christian churches, all the priests, they eat meat. They're supporting everything, homosex, everything, man to man marriage.
Bali-mardana: Now they are making women the priests.
Prabhupada: Women priest. Women priest, there was none before?

Letter to: Jennifer Wayne Woodward, Honolulu 10 June, 1975

First of all, you decide whether you are female or male, then be one or the other. Then, you may enter our temple any time you like. But sometimes man and sometimes woman, that is not proper. Such awkward thing cannot be allowed. It will be disturbing to others. Anyway, continue to chant Hare Krishna as much as possible.

Arrival Speech, Chicago, July 3, 1975

Nitai: "Because the body is made of senses, which also require a certain amount of satisfaction, there are regulative directions for satisfaction of such senses, but the senses are not meant for unrestricted enjoyment. For example, marriage..."
Prabhupada: That is not enjoyment. Just like sex indulgence. If you indulge in more than necessary, then you will be impotent. Nature will stop. You know impotency? That will be there. Impotency. This homosex is also another sign of impotency. They do not feel sex impulse to woman. They feel sex impulse in man. That means he is impotent. It is impotency. So things are coming so rubbish now. This is the time for preaching our program, standard. Then?
Nitai: "For example, marriage, or the combination of a man with a woman, is necessary for progeny, but it is not meant for sense enjoyment."
Prabhupada: Now this progeny is bother. It is sense enjoyment, homosex. Progeny, they don't want. They're not interested. Only sense gratification. This is another sign of impotency. When after enjoying so many women, they become impotent, then they artificially create another sex impulse in homosex. This is the psychology. So people are degraded so much.

Morning Walk, July 16, 1975, San Francisco

Bahulasva: In California they have passed a law that homosexuality is legal. So the psychologists say that they see the dogs and the hogs and monkeys having homosex relationships, so on that grounds, they say, it

should be legal.
Prabhupada: They have got homosex? Dogs, hogs, I don't think.
Bahulasva: Yeah, dogs, they say. We were preaching in this one convention that the dogs are also fighting. So therefore fighting and murder should be legal too because the dogs do that also.

Morning Walk, September 6, 1975, Vrindavana

Prabhupada: No. Para-daresu. Matravat para-daresu. That is the injunction of the sas...Other's wife. Not that "Oh, my wife is also my mother." Just see. This lunacy is going on, and this lunatic man is taken as incarnation of God. This is going on. This homosex propaganda is another side of impotency. So that is natural. If you enjoy too much, then you become impotent.
Brahmananda: They are trying to make that more and more accepted in America, homosex.
Prabhupada: Yes. The churches accept. It is already law.
Nitai: This women's liberation movement, the leaders are also homosexual. They're lesbians.
Prabhupada: (laughs) Just see. Hare Krishna. The whole world is on the verge of ruination. Kali-yuga.

Morning Walk, December 10, 1975, Vrindavana

Indian man: She was telling me when... She... I said that "Prabhupada sometimes says these things that we feel all ashamed, you know, because..."
Devotee (2): The medicine is not always palatable for these people.
Prabhupada: But in speaking spiritual understanding we cannot make any compromise. What to speak of in Mauritius, in Chicago I told. There was great agitation in papers.
Harikesa: In the TV, on television.
Indian man: Same thing?

Devotee (2): In France also.

Prabhupada: They were very upset. And when I was coming, I think, in Chicago, in the airplane, one of the host girl, she was seeing... (laughter) I asked her to supply one 7-up. And, "I have no key." She was so angry. But all the captains and others, they gathered around me. (laughter)

Harikesa: I think that was the same stewardess who came in the back and asked us, "Why the Swamiji doesn't like women?"

Prabhupada: No, no, I don't say that I don't like women, but I cannot say that equal rights. How can I say? First of all show that you equal rights — your husband becomes sometimes pregnant and then you become pregnant, alternately.

Aksayananda: That doesn't mean you don't like them.

Prabhupada: No, it is truth. I am speaking the truth, that "If you have equal right, then let your husband become pregnant. Make some arrangement."

Harikesa: Visakha was preaching to her. She said that "Actually we are less intelligent." (laughter) That started a big scandal...

Prabhupada: Yes. And that is Krishna consciousness. [break] They are in equal right, then... Nowadays, of course, they are thinking like that, that man should remain independent, and they'll have homosex, and the woman also independent and they will make some... This is most immoral things.

Room Conversation, January 8, 1976, Nellore

Prabhupada: That they are doing. Still they are doing. Just like you said, some sprinkling water. They have no philosophy and they violate everything, what is stated there in Bible. Now you say that "Thou shall not kill;" they say, "Thou shall not murder." They are molding. Now this homosex they are sanctioning, man-to-man marriage. They are sanctioning abortion.

Acyutananda: Yes. Two homosexuals were married by a priest.

Prabhupada: Yes.

Tamala Krishna: Now they have a church where the priests are

homosexuals and the attending people are homosexual.
Prabhupada: Hm?
Tamala Krishna: Now they have churches for homosex. That means the priest is a homosexual, and the persons who come are homosexuals. A special church for homosexuals.
Prabhupada: Just see. Is that religion?

Morning Walk, April 8, 1976, Mayapur

It is not their fault. The Western civilization is like that. Now you have to make a thorough change. The persons from the ecclesiastical order, they are also so polluted, they are sanctioning homosex, abortion. What can be done for the common man?

Morning Walk, June 6, 1976, Los Angeles

Just see. Rascal priests also so sinful. Yes, they're supporting homosex. So when the priests are sinful, the public is sinful, how the church will go on? Churches, they are expecting church must support abortion and child killing.

Morning Walk, June 17, 1976, Toronto

Jagadisa: I remember, Srila Prabhupada, when I was young I was brought up in the Catholic church, and I learned to fear God, and be afraid of God. But then as I went to high school, due to...
Prabhupada: .... association, everything is bad(?). So degraded condition, there is no good association. Therefore I say that we require a first-class man section. A first-class.... All third class, fourth class. Even the so-called priests, they are also fourth-class, fifth-class men. Indulging in homosex.

Room Conversation, June 18, 1976, Toronto

Prabhupada: No, no. He was made chief. Guru Maharaja did not make him chief. But after his passing away, some of our Godbrothers voted him chief.
Pusta Krishna: Am I mis...? You had told me once, I'm not certain. Maybe I made a mistake. You said that Vasudeva, it was known fact that he was homosex?
Prabhupada: Yes.
Pusta Krishna: Vasudeva.
Prabhupada: He was homosex and sex, everything.
Pusta Krishna: Here, Srila Prabhupada, in this city.... I haven't been back in so many years to America. Things have become more degraded. I'm watching women and women walking arm around each other. And I asked, "What is this?" "Oh," he says "they are lesbians." Women together, girlfriends. They don't mix with men.
Prabhupada: This is now very much prevalent in America.

Conversation on Train to Allahabad, January 11, 1977, India

Ramesvara: And I found an article in the Time magazine about another translator of Bhagavad-gita, Christopher Isherwood.
Prabhupada: He is rascal, another rascal.
Ramesvara: They have reported that he is a homosexual.
Prabhupada: Just see. Now, who cares for all these nonsense?
Ramesvara: In regards to brainwashing, they claim that our life-style tends to take the devotee and isolate him from the world.
Prabhupada: Yes. We hate to mix with you. No gentleman tries to mix with loafers. In England still, the rich quarter is different from the poor quarter. Is it not?

Room Conversation, February 16, 1977, Mayapura

Homosex, what is that religion? And they're passing to homosex, religion. They're getting married man to man. Most degraded.

Room Conversation, April 28, 1977, Bombay

Prabhupada: Because they have no valid philosophy. It is simply official. They have nothing, no knowledge, no nothing, simply that dress and cloth. That's all.
Tamala Krishna: Just like the original... When Jesus was there and he had twelve disciples, they simply gave up everything and traveled with him and tried to preach. So they were renunciates, living simply whatever they could take, nothing more, and devoting their lives to God. But the followers later on, more and more they added the degree of sense gratification, till now you can't see any renunciation at all within their order.
Prabhupada: No, they are drinking. They are having homosex. They are encouraging homosex, giving man-to-man marriage. You know that? This is going on. Doing everything nonsense.

Room Conversation, July 14, 1977, Vrindavana

Prabhupada: The hippies are nothing but a group of madmen, that's all. A madman, they..., means publicly sex, that's all. This Allen Ginsberg's movement is that, homosex, public sex. Ginsberg was very proud that he had introduced homosex. He was telling me.
Tamala Krishna: He was telling you?
Prabhupada: When he first came to me he was very proud: "I have introduced homosex." He thought very brilliant work it was.

His Views Concerning Women

Lecture on BG 16.7 — Hawaii, February 3, 1975

Prabhupada: Otherwise it doesn’t matter what he is, which family he’s born. It doesn’t matter. Krsna says, you’ll find, mam hi partha vyapasritya ye ‘pi syuh papa-yonayah BG 9.32 . Papa-yoni. To take birth low-grade family, or animal family, these are called papa-yoni. Krsna says that it

doesn’t matter if one is born in the papa-yoni, low-grade family. It doesn’t matter. Mam hi partha vyapasritya ye ‘pi syuh papa-yonayah. In the human society, striyah sudras tatha vaisyah, even woman and sudra and vaisya, they are also taken in the category of papa-yoni. Papa-yoni means their intelligence is not very sharp. That is called papa-yoni. And a brahmana means to become very, very highly intellectual. That is called brahmana. Because he’ll understand Brahman.

SB 4.4.3 purport

Prabhupada: Generally, separation between husband and wife is due to womanly behavior; divorce takes place due to womanly weakness. The best course for a woman is to abide by the orders of her husband.

Lecture on SB — Sept. 13, 1969

Prabhupada: In India still, the system is follow(ed) in conservative families that a widow cannot marry. There is no widow marriage in India. They, the… Manu-samhita, the law-givers, the saintly persons, Manu-samhita… Why widow marriage is prohibited? The idea is generally, everywhere, in all countries, the female population is greater than the male population. So the idea is that she has become widow. She was once married. Now if again she is married, another virgin girl, she does not get the chance of being married. Therefore there is no widow marriage according to Hindu scripture. And a man is allowed, if he is, I mean to say able man, he can marry more than one wife. Not that simply marry. To get more than one wife does not mean sense enjoyment. The wife must be maintained very respectfully. She must have good house, good ornaments, good food, good servants.

Lecture on BG — Hawaii, February 3rd, 1975

Prabhupada: To understand Brahman is not the business of tiny brain. Alpha-medhasan. There are two Sanskrit words, alpa-medhasa and sumedhasa. Alpa-medhasa means having little brain substance. Physiologically, within the brain there are brain substance. It is found that the brain substance in man is found up to 64 ounce. They are very highly

intellectual persons. And in woman the brain substance is not found more than 34 ounce. You'll find, therefore, that there is no very great scientist, mathematician, philosopher, among women. You'll never find because their brain substance cannot go.

Artificially do not try to become equal with men. That is not allowed in the Vedic sastra. Na striyam svatantratam arhati. That is called sastra. You have to understand that woman is never given to be independence. Independence means just like child has to be taken care, similarly, woman has to be taken care. You cannot get your child go in the street alone. There will be danger. Similarly, according to Vedic civilization, Manu-samhita, woman should be given protection. In this way, acara, this is called acara. So the demons, they do not know. The demons, they do not know what is what, how one thing should be treated, how… They do not know. In the Western countries there is no such distinction between man and woman. But there is.

Morning Walk — May 1, 1974, Bombay

Prabhupada: Put problems. I'll solve.

Yogesvara: Here's a problem. The women today want the same rights as men. How can they be satisfied?

Prabhupada: Everything will be satisfied. Just like our women, Krsna conscious, they are working. They don't want equal rights with men. It is due to Krsna consciousness. They are cleansing the temple, they are cooking very nicely. They are satisfied. They never say that "I have to go to Japan for preaching like Prabhupad." They never say. This is artificial. So Krsna consciousness means work in his constitutional position. The women, men, when they remain in their constitutional position, there will be no artificial (indistinct) (loud traffic noises)

Bhagavan: They say that our women are unintelligent because they submit so easily, but…

Prabhupada: Subway?

Dhananjaya: No. This is also public transport, other trains.

Bhagavan: But actually, our women are so qualified in so many ways, but these girls who simply work in the city can do nothing. They can't cook, they can't clean, they can't sew.

Prabhupada: All rubbish. These modern girls, they are all rubbish. Therefore they are simply used for sex satisfaction. Topless, bottomless…

Letter to Disciple — 23rd October, 1972

My dear Soucharya devi,

…Another item is, you are married wife, so in that position you should serve your husband nicely, always being attentive to his needs, and in this way, because he is always absorbed in serving Krishna, by serving your husband you will also get Krishna, through him. He is your spiritual master, but he must be responsible for giving you all spiritual help, teaching you as he advances his own knowledge and realization. That is the vedic system: The wife becomes a devotee of her husband, the husband becomes a devotee of Krishna; the wife serves her husband faithfully, the husband protects his wife by giving her spiritual guidance. So you should simply do whatever your husband instructs you to do, however he may require your assistance. Of course, the nature of woman is to be attached to her husband and family, so our system is to minimize this attachment by making the ultimate goal of our activity the pleasure of Krishna. Just try to please Krishna always, and no material circumstances will be able to cause you any discomfort.

Hoping this meets you in good health. Your ever well-wisher, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Television Interview — July 9, 1975, Chicago

Woman reporter: But you say women are subordinate to men?

Prabhupada: Yes, that is also natural. Because when the husband and wife are there or the father and daughter is there, so the daughter is

subordinate to the father and the wife is subordinate to the husband.

Woman reporter: What happens when women are not subordinate to men?

Prabhupada: Then there is disruption. There is disruption, social disruption. If the woman does not become subordinate to man, then there is social disruption. Therefore, in the western countries there are so many divorce cases because the woman does not agree to become subordinate to man. That is the cause.

SB 9.3.10 purport

Prabhupada: However great a woman may be, she must place herself before her husband in this way; that is to say, she must be ready to carry out her husband's orders and please him in all circumstances. Then her life will be successful. When the wife becomes as irritable as the husband, their life at home is sure to be disturbed or ultimately completely broken. In the modern day, the wife is never submissive, and therefore home life is broken even by slight incidents. Either the wife or the husband may take advantage of the divorce laws. According to the Vedic law, however, there is no such thing as divorce laws, and a woman must be trained to be submissive to the will of her husband. Westerners contend that this is a slave mentality for the wife, but factually it is not; it is the tactic by which a woman can conquer the heart of her husband, however irritable or cruel he may be. In this case we clearly see that although Cyavana Muni was not young but indeed old enough to be Sukanyā's grandfather and was also very irritable, Sukanyā, the beautiful young daughter of a king, submitted herself to her old husband and tried to please him in all respects. Thus she was a faithful and chaste wife.

SB 9.6.53 purport

Prabhupada: As stated in Bhagavad-Gita (9.32), striyo vaisyas tatha sudras te 'pi yanti param gatim. Women are not considered very powerful in following spiritual principles, but if a woman is fortunate enough to get a suitable husband who is spiritually advanced and if she always engages in his service, she also gets the same benefit as her husband. Here it is

clearly said that the wives of Saubhari Muni also entered the spiritual world by the influence of their husband. They were unfit, but because they were faithful followers of their husband, they also entered the spiritual world with him. Thus a woman should be a faithful servant of her husband, and if the husband is spiritually advanced, the woman will automatically get the opportunity to enter the spiritual world.

SB 3.23.2 purport

Prabhupada: Here two words are very significant. Devahuti served her husband in two ways, visrambhena and gauravena. These are two important processes in serving the husband or the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Visrambhena means “with intimacy,” and gauravena means “with great reverence.” The husband is a very intimate friend; therefore, the wife must render service just like an intimate friend, and at the same time she must understand that the husband is superior in position, and thus she must offer him all respect. A man’s psychology and woman’s psychology are different. As constituted by bodily frame, a man always wants to be superior to his wife, and a woman, as bodily constituted, is naturally inferior to her husband. Thus the natural instinct is that the husband wants to post himself as superior to the wife, and this must be observed. Even if there is some wrong on the part of the husband, the wife must tolerate it, and thus there will be no misunderstanding between husband and wife. Visrambhena means “with intimacy,” but it must not be familiarity that breeds contempt. According to the Vedic civilization, a wife cannot call her husband by name. In the present civilization the wife calls her husband by name, but in Hindu civilization she does not. Thus the inferiority and superiority complexes are recognized. Damena ca: a wife has to learn to control herself even if there is a misunderstanding. Sauhrdena vaca madhuraya means always desiring good for the husband and speaking to him with sweet words. A person becomes agitated by so many material contacts in the outside world; therefore, in his home life he must be treated by his wife with sweet words.

Morning Walk — March 19, 1976, Mayapura

Prabhupāda: Ādi-puruṣam. Govindam ādi-puruṣam, that puruṣa. Govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi. We are worshiping that supreme and original person. And the women are declaring, “independent.” They are begging door to door to a man, “Please give me shelter. Give me a child,” and they’re independent. One American woman, was…. She was speaking that “In India the woman are treated as slave. We don’t want.” So I told her that it is better to become slave of one person than to slave of become hundreds. (laughter) The woman must become a slave. So instead of becoming slaves of so many persons, it is better to remain satisfied, a slave of one person. So she was stopped. She was the secretary of that Dr. Miśra. You know that? And our Vedic civilization says, narī-rūpaṁ pati-vratam: “The woman is beautiful when she remains as a slave to the husband.” That is the beauty, not the personal beauty. How much she has learned to remain as a slave to the husband, that is Vedic civilization. Kokilānāṁ svaro rūpam. The cuckoo, it is black bird, but why people love it? Because of the sweet voice. Kokilānāṁ svaro rūpaṁ vidyā-rūpaṁ kurūpaṇam. A man may be ugly, black, but if he’s learned, everyone will respect him. And narī-rūpaṁ pati-vratam. And the beauty of woman is how much she is devoted and obedient to the husband. So it is very difficult.

Lecture on SB 1.2.2 — Rome, May 26, 1974

Prabhupada: The duty of Vaisnava is to reclaim these fallen souls. Just like Krsna says in the Bhagavad-gita, mam hi partha vyapasritya ye ‘pi syuh papa-yonayah. Find out this verse:

mam hi partha vyapasritya
ye ‘pi syuh papa-yonayah
striyo vaisyas tatha sudras
te ‘pi yanti param gatim

Krsna says, “Anyone who comes under My shelter, never mind he is the lowest of the low, lowborn…” The striyo vaisyah… Formerly, even the woman and the mercantile community and sudras, they were also considered as papa-yoni. Papa-yoni means whose brain is not very developed. That is papa-yoni. Blunt-headed. What is that?

Nitai:

“O son of Prtha, those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birth—woman, vaisyas merchants, as well as sudras, workers—can approach the supreme destination.”

Prabhupada: So the supreme destination, back to Godhead, back to home, is for everyone. It is not that God… God means for everyone. God does not say, “Only the brahmana class of men, please come here. Others all rejected.” No. He is inviting everyone. Even the lowest of the lowest, low-born, papa-yonayah, women, sudra, or vaisyas, everyone.

Morning Walk — January 9, 1977, Bombay

Prabhupada: I condemn everyone, that “You are all dogs and hogs.” And United Nations a pack of dogs barking. That’s a fact. And in Chicago I said, all women, “You cannot have freedom. You have got only thirty-four-ounce brain, and man has got sixty-four-ounce.” I told them. So I became a subject of very great criticism.

Trivikrama: Women’s liberation.

Prabhupada: I denied, “No, you cannot have.” I told them. One girl in the airship, she was seeing like (makes some gesture-laughter). I asked her, “Give me 7-Up.” “It is locked now.” So I frankly said that “No, no. You cannot have equal rights because your brain is thirty-four ounce.” Actually that’s a fact. Where is woman philosopher, mathematician, scientist? Not a single.

Dr. Patel: Apart from that, I mean, they are made for a particular mission.

Prabhupada: How they can have equal rights? Up to date in the history there is not a single woman who is a great scientist or great philosopher or great…

Dr. Patel: Madame Curie was a…

Prabhupada: All bogus. (laughter)

Dr. Patel: You are getting too harsh on them because…

Prabhupada: No, no. How can I give you equal rights, because your brain is less substance.

Dr. Patel: We cannot degrade our mothers that way.

Prabhupada: It is not degrading. It is accepting the actual fact.

Press Conference — July 9, 1975, Chicago

Reporter (3): (a woman) Where… Do women fit into this social structure? You keep referring to man.

Prabhupada: Woman is not equally intelligent as a man.

Reporter (3): Equal in intelligence?

Prabhupada: Not equal intelligence. In the psychology, practical psychology, they have found that the man's brain has been found up to sixty-four ounce, woman… Sixty-four ounce, man's brain. And woman's brain has been found, thirty-six ounce. So therefore woman is not equally intelligent like man.

Lecture on SB 1.3.21 — Los Angeles, September 26, 1972

Prabhupada: And it has been found that a woman does not have more than thirty-six ounce of brain substance, whereas in man it has been found that he has got up to sixty-four ounce. Now, this is modern science. Therefore generally, generally, woman, less intelligent than man. You cannot find any big scientist, any big mathematician, any big philosopher amongst woman. That is not possible. Although in your country, you want equal status with man, freedom, but by nature you are less intelligent. What can be done? (laughter)

Interview with Trans-India Magazine — July 17, 1976, New York

Prabhupada: So actually this varnasrama system is meant for bringing the

man in the lower status of life to the higher status of life. It doesn’t matter one is born in a low-grade family. That is also said by Krsna: mam hi partha vyapasritya ye ‘pi syuh papa-yonayah. Papa-yoni, lower grade. Striyo vaisyas tatha sudrah BG 9.32 . In the human society, woman, the vaisya and the sudra, they are considered in the lower status, not very intelligent.

Lecture on BG 1.40 — London, July 28, 1973

Prabhupada: Canakya Pandita says: visvasam naiva kartavyam strisu raja-kulesu ca. Visvasam naiva kartavyam. “Don’t trust women.” Visvasam naiva kartavyam strisu. Strisu means women. Raja-kula… And politicians. Yes. Visvasam naiva kartavyam strisu raja-kulesu ca. Never the trust the politician and woman. Of course, when woman comes to Krsna consciousness, that position is different. We are speaking of ordinary woman. Because Krsna says, in another place, striyo vaisyas tatha sudrah BG 9.32 . They are considered, women, vaisya, the mercantile community, and sudra, and the worker class, they are less intelligent. Papa-yoni. When the progeny is defective, then they become less intelligent.

SB 1.7.42 purport

Prabhupada: Women as a class are no better than boys, and therefore they have no discriminatory power like that of a man.

BG 1.40 purport

-According to Canakya Pandita, women are generally not very intelligent and therefore not trustworthy.
-As children are very prone to be misled, women are similarly very prone to degradation.

BG 16.7 purport

Prabhupada: Now, in the Manu-samhita it is clearly stated that a woman should not be given freedom. That does not mean that women are to be kept as slaves, but they are like children. The demons have now neglected

such injunctions, and they think that women should be given as much freedom as men.

SB 3.31.41, purport

Prabhupada: A woman's attachment to her husband may elevate her to the body of a man in her next life, but a mans attachment to woman will degrade him, and in his next life he will get the body of a woman.

His Views Concerning Women's Education

Lecture on SB 1.3.13 — Los Angeles, September 18, 1972

Prabhupada: So dealing with woman... Especially instruction are given to men. All literatures, all Vedic literatures, they are especially meant for instruction to the men. Woman is to follow the husband. That's all. The husband will give instruction to the wife. There is no such thing as the girl should go to school to take brahmacari asrama or go to spiritual master to take instruction. That is not Vedic system. Vedic system is a man is fully instructed, and woman, girl, must be married to a man. Even the man may have many wives, polygamy, still, every woman should be married. And she would get instruction from the husband. This is Vedic system. Woman is not allowed to go to school, college, or to the spiritual master. But husband and wife, they can be initiated. That is Vedic system.

Morning Conversation — April 29, 1977, Bombay

Prabhupāda: So far gurukula is concerned, that also, I have given program. They have given the name of "girls." We are not going to do that.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: What is that?

Prabhupāda: Girls. Boys and girls. That is dangerous.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Gurukula.

Prabhupāda: In that article.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Oh, oh, oh.

Prabhupāda: Girls should be completely separated from the very beginning. They are very dangerous.

Tamala Krsna: So we're... I thought there were girls in Vrindävana now. They said that they're going to have the girls' gurukula behind the boys' gurukula. Gopäla was talking about that.

Prabhupada: No, no, no. No girls.

Tamala Krsna: It should be in another city or somewhere else.

Prabhupada: Yes. They should be taught how to sweep, how to stitch...

Tamala Krsna: Clean.

Prabhupada: ...clean, cook, to be faithful to the husband.

Tamala Krsna: They don't require a big school.

Prabhupada: No, no. That is mistake. They should be taught how to become obedient to the husband.

Tamala Krsna: Yeah, you won't learn that in school.

Prabhupada: Little education, they can...

Tamala Krsna: Yeah. That they can get at home also.

Prabhupada: They should be stopped, this practice of prostitution. This is a very bad system in Europe and America. The boys and girls, they are educated-coeducation. From the very beginning of their life they become prostitutes. And they encourage.

Morning Walk — July 10, 1975, Chicago

Prabhupāda: No, no, it is not bad. It is good. Now our policy should be that at Dallas we shall create first-class men, and we shall teach the girls two

things. One thing is how to become chaste and faithful to their husband and how to cook nicely. If these two qualifications they have, I will take guarantee to get for them good husband. I'll personally… Yes. These two qualifications required. She must learn how to prepare first-class foodstuff, and she must learn how to become chaste and faithful to the husband. Only these two qualification required. Then her life is successful. So try to do that. (Car doors open, walk begins) Ordinary education is sufficient, ABCD. This is all nonsense, so big, big, sound education and later on become a prostitute. What is this education? (laughter) To make them prostitute, it doesn't require education. [break] Yesterday we saw in the television how these rascals are wasting time, talking nonsense. There was nothing, valuable talk. Foot… No, no, hand… What is that? Handprint? And the addicted murder? That was the case? [break] Within two weeks, two divorces.

Devotees: Yes. [break]

Prabhupāda: In the Dallas there is no problem. Educate the girls how to become faithful, chaste wife and how to cook nicely. Let them learn varieties of cooking. Is very difficult? These two qualifications, apart from Kṛṣṇa consciousness, materially they should learn. There are many stories, Nala-Damayantī, then Pārvatī, Sītā, five chaste women in the history. They should read their life. And by fifteenth, sixteenth year they should be married. And if they are qualified, it will be not difficult to find out a nice husband. Here the boys, they do not want to marry because they are not very much inclined to marry unchaste wife. They know it, that "I shall marry a girl, she is unchaste." What do you think?

Morning Walk — March 14, 1974, Vrindavan

Satsvarupa: Srila Prabhupada, is this school for women also, or just for men?

Prabhupada: For men. Women should automatically learn how to cook, how to cleanse home.

Satsvarupa: So they don't attend varnasrama college.

Prabhupada: No, no. Varnasrama college especially meant for the brahmana, ksatriya and vaisya. Those who are not fit for education, they are sudras. That's all. Or those who are reluctant to take education, sudra means. That's all. They should assist the higher class.

Room conversation — January 31, 1977, Bhubaneshwar

Satsvarüpa: Yes. (break) Mainly it's about the girls who are over ten. They were in Vrndävana and discussed this with Jagadisa, but they couldn't settle up, so they wanted to know what you think. Their idea is that... As of now, there is no plan for a school for the girls over ten, but just that they should return to their parents and not get any more schooling. But they're thinking that there should be, and one reason is that you said in France that the girls could learn these sixty-four arts. So they were thinking that there should be a school for girls over ten, and that it should be situated in India. One reason is that in India our teachers can take help from Indian Life Member ladies who know these arts. Our Western devotees don't know them, the cooking and painting and things like this, but the Indian women do. ...

Prabhupada: My opinion is already there according to the... They should be chaste, faithful to husband. Little literary knowledge, they can read. That's all. Not very much.

Letter to Female Disciple — 16 February, 1972 Calcutta

My Dear Chaya dasi,

Please accept my blessings. I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated January 29, 1972, and I have noted the contents.

Complete separation from the boys is not necessary for girls at such young age, so I don't require that they must be educated separately, only that they should live separately. What do they know of boy or girl at such young age? There was one question by a little girl like Sarasvati to her father: "Father, when you were young were you a boy or a girl?"

So when they are grown up, at about 10 to 12 years old, then you can make separate departments for teaching also. But while they are so young, although they must live in separate boys and girls quarters, they may be educated sometimes together, there is no such restriction that little girls should not have association with little boys, not until they are grown up.

All the children should learn to read and write very nicely, and a little mathematics, so that they will be able to read our books. Cooking, sewing, things like that do not require schooling, they are learned simply by association. There is no question of academic education for either boys or girls–simply a little mathematics and being able to read and write well, that's all, no universities.

Their higher education they will get from our books, and other things they will get from experience, like preaching, SKP, etc. Alongside the regular classes in reading and writing, the other routine programs they should also participate in, like arati, kirtana, preaching, Sankirtana, like that.

You ask about marriage, yes, actually I want that every woman in the Society should be married. But what is this training to become wives and mothers? No school is required for that, simply association. And it is not necessary to say that women only can instruct the girls and men only can instruct the boys, not when they are so young. At 12 years, they may be initiated.

A woman's real business is to look after household affairs, keep everything neat and clean, and if there is sufficient milk supply available, she should always be engaged in churning butter, making yogurt, curd, so many nice varieties, simply from milk. The woman should be cleaning, sewing, like that.

So if you simply practice these things yourselves and show examples, they will learn automatically, one doesn't have to give formal instruction in these matters.

Hoping this will meet you in good health.

Your ever well-wisher,
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

His Views Supporting Dictatorship as a Preferred Form of Governance

Lecture on BG 1.4-5 — London, July 10, 1973

Prabhupada: So up to that point, Mahārāja Parīkṣit, the whole planet was very nicely governed by dictatorship. So we can bring in such dictatorship, provided that dictator is perfectly Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Press Conference at Airport — July 28, 1975, Dallas

Prabhupada: So dictatorship is good, provided the dictator is highly qualified spiritually.

Room Conversation — August 21, 1975, Bombay

Prabhupada: I like this position, dictatorship. Personally I like this.

Prabhupada: Mahatma Gandhi was practically a dictator, but he was a man of high moral character, so people accepted him. Dictatorship can be good provided the dictator is spiritually developed.

Morning Walk — January 12, 1976, Bombay

Prabhupada: Dr. Patel: Now she is not going to have any more elections. “Elections are not necessary. People have given me the mandate to rule over them.”

Prabhupāda: Yes, that’s nice. If the dictator, executive officer, is very nice, religious, then there is no need of this election.

Morning Walk — July 10, 1975, Chicago

Brahmānanda: What would be your advice to her? [Indira Gandhi]

Prabhupāda: My first step will be to capture all the hoarders and distribute the grains free. Immediately public will be obliged to… There are immense food grains; they are simply hoarded. They are not selling without good price. This is going on. Immediately she can capture the public. And some of the hoarders should be hanged, yes, so that in future nobody will hoard. People are hungry. And she says she has got some program, garivi hatta (?), “Drive away the poverty.” This is the point. If she can supply all consumer goods for the time being free to the poor, then immediately the whole population will be after her. And the hoarders should be exemplary punished. Shoot them, that’s all. Then nobody will hoard. But to remain the dictator she requires spiritual knowledge. Otherwise it will be another disaster. If she wants to remain the dictator, then she must be a spiritual man. She must become a Vaiṣṇavī.

Purport, Srimad Bhagavatam, 1.17.36

Prabhupada: Following in the footsteps of Mahārāja Parīkṣit, it is the duty of all executive heads of states to see that the principles of religion, namely austerity, cleanliness, mercy and truthfulness, are established in the state, and that the principles of irreligion, namely pride, illicit female association or prostitution, intoxication and falsity, are checked by all means. And to make the best use of a bad bargain, the personality of Kali may be transferred to places of gambling, drinking, prostitution and slaughterhouses, if there are any places like that. Those who are addicted to these irreligious habits may be regulated by the injunctions of the scripture. In no circumstances should they be encouraged by any state. In other words, the state should categorically stop all sorts of gambling, drinking, prostitution and falsity. The state which wants to eradicate corruption by majority may introduce the principles of religion in the following manner:

1. Two compulsory fasting days in a month, if not more (austerity). Even from the economic point of view, such two fasting days in a month in the state will save tons of food, and the system will also act very favorably on

the general health of the citizens.

2. There must be compulsory marriage of young boys and girls attaining twenty-four years of age and sixteen years of age respectively. There is no harm in coeducation in the schools and colleges, provided the boys and girls are duly married, and in case there is any intimate connection between a male and female student, they should be married properly without illicit relation. The divorce act is encouraging prostitution, and this should be abolished.

3. The citizens of the state must give in charity up to fifty percent of their income for the purpose of creating a spiritual atmosphere in the state or in human society, both individually and collectively. They should preach the principles of Bhāgavatam by (a) karma-yoga, or doing everything for the satisfaction of the Lord, (b) regular hearing of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam from authorized persons or realized souls, (c) chanting of the glories of the Lord congregationally at home or at places of worship, (d) rendering all kinds of service to bhāgavatas engaged in preaching Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and (e) residing in a place where the atmosphere is saturated with God consciousness. If the state is regulated by the above process, naturally there will be God consciousness everywhere.

Gambling of all description, even speculative business enterprise, is considered to be degrading, and when gambling is encouraged in the state, there is a complete disappearance of truthfulness. Allowing young boys and girls to remain unmarried more than the above-mentioned ages and licensing animal slaughterhouses of all description should be at once prohibited. The flesh-eaters may be allowed to take flesh as mentioned in the scriptures, and not otherwise. Intoxication of all description-even smoking cigarettes, chewing tobacco or the drinking of tea-must be prohibited.

> [Prabhupada at other times said that the government should support prostitution because they provide a needed service, see http://vanisource.org/wiki/SB_1.11.19

He also claimed that the Kshatriya caste (the political and martial class) were allowed to have "illicit sex," take intoxicants, gamble, kill animals and eat them, see http://vedabase.net/sb/4/22/13/. This may come as a surprise to many of his followers. He would give allowance for Kshatriyas in various place in his books and in lectures, and also in response to questions by a few of his followers about the descriptions they had read in the ancient scriptures and epics of famous figures indulging in all of those things -- which Prabhupada had taught were subhuman activities and meant to be prohibited by the state. For example: the Pandavas would drink wine, gamble, have sex for pleasure, and hunt. Also ganja and soma were widely used and spoken of very highly in the ancient scriptures]

His Views Promoting the “Moon Landing Hoax” Conspiracy Theory and Related Cosmological Vision

See: Can you answer?

His Views Promoting the Idea that Women Enjoy Being Raped

Purport SB 4.25.41

Prabhupada: In this regard, the word vikhyatam is very significant. A man is always famous for his aggression toward a beautiful woman, and such aggression is sometimes considered rape. Although rape is not legally allowed, it is a fact that a woman likes a man who is very expert at rape.

Purport SB 4.25.42

Prabhupada: When a husbandless woman is attacked by an aggressive man, she takes his action to be mercy. A woman is generally very much attracted by a man’s long arms. A serpent’s body is round, and it becomes narrower and thinner at the end. The beautiful arms of a man appear to a woman just like serpents, and she very much desires to be embraced by

such arms.

The word anatha-varga is very significant in this verse. Natha means “husband,” and a means “without.” A young woman who has no husband is called anatha, meaning “one who is not protected.” As soon as a woman attains the age of puberty, she immediately becomes very much agitated by sexual desire. It is therefore the duty of the father to get his daughter married before she attains puberty. Otherwise she will be very much mortified by not having a husband. Anyone who satisfies her desire for sex at that age becomes a great object of satisfaction. It is a psychological fact that when a woman at the age of puberty meets a man and the man satisfies her sexually, she will love that man for the rest of her life, regardless who he is. Thus so-called love within this material world is nothing but sexual satisfaction.

Morning Walk — May 11, 1975, Perth

Prabhupada: Yes, that is law always. Rape means without consent, sex. Otherwise there is no rape. There was a rape case in Calcutta, and the lawyer was very intelligent. He some way or other made the woman admit, “Yes, I felt happiness.” So he was released. “Here is consent.” And that’s a fact. Because after all, sex, rape or no rape, they will feel some pleasure. So the lawyer by hook and crook made the woman agree, “Yes, I felt some pleasure.” “Now, there is consent.” So he was released. After all, it is an itching sensation. So either by force or by willingly, if there is itching, everyone feels relieved itching it. That’s a psychology. It is not that the woman do not like rape. They like sometimes. They willingly. That is the psychology. Outwardly they show some displeasure, but inwardly they do not. This is the psychology.

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Vedanta, self introspection, and free will.

Part 1: Thought and free will

First we need a definition of free will that we can all agree on. If you look up free will in any dictionary you will get some variation of this from the Oxford English Dictionary:

> The power to act without the constraints of necessity or fate; the ability to act at one's own discretion.

Shastra teaches that we do not have free will according to the above definition. We are taught that we are constrained by our nature and karma. The ontological nature of the jiva is taught by Krishna in the Gita:

> 9.10
>
> **mayadhyakshena prakritih / suyate sa-caracaram**
> **hetunanena kaunteya / jagad viparivarttate**
>
> Prakriti (comprises everything in the universe/sub-atomic energy) works under my supervision, *mayadhyakshena prakritih*, completely controlling all of creation, *suyate sa-caracaram*. This is how the universe works son of Kunti, *hetunanena kaunteya jagad viparivarttate*.

13.30

prakrityaiva ca karmani / kriyamanani sarvasah
yah pasyati tathatmanam / akarttaram sa pasyati

All activities taking place, in all respects, are performed by prakriti, *prakrtyaiva ca karmani kriyamanani sarvasah*. Who sees, *yah pasyati*, that the atma is not the doer, *atmanam akarttaram*, he sees, *sah pasyati*.

After speaking almost the entire Gita we get to the last few slokas where Krishna sums up his message to Arjuna. The Gita began with Arjuna saying he wasn't going to fight. After speaking on the nature of the atman in relation to Param Atman, Krishna ends with telling Arjuna:

18.59-61

yad ahankaram asritya / na yotsya iti manyase
mithyaiva vyavasayas te / prakritis tvam
niyokshyati

You were thinking that you will not fight, *na yotsya iti manyase*. But that is due to your misconception of your self and reality, *yad ahankaram asritya* . That resolution was in vain, *mithyaiva vyavasayas te*, prakriti will engage you (make you fight), *prakritis tvam niyokshyati*.

svabhava-jena kaunteya / nibaddhah svena karmana
kartum necchasi yan mohat / karishyasy avaso 'pi tat

Your will not to act is illusory, *kartum necchasi yan mohat*. Bound by actions, *nibaddhah svena karmana*, born of your nature son of Kunti, *svabhava-jena kaunteya*, helpless, you will act *karishyasy avaso 'pi*

tat.

isvarah sarva-bhutanam / hrid-dese ‘rjuna tishthati
bhramayan sarva-bhutani / yantrarudhani mayaya

The supreme controller is at the heart of all beings Arjuna, *isvarah sarva-bhutanam hrid-dese ‘rjuna tishthati*, driving the movements of all living beings, *bhramayan sarva-bhutani*, who are mounted on the machine of his universal potency, *yantrarudhani mayaya*.

Even if you don’t accept the shastric version of reality, through logic and analysis it can be shown that we do not possess free will:

How do we make decisions and then act on them? Our actions are seemingly determined by either 1) following through on our thoughts 2) by spontaneous reflexive action 3) by a combination of both:

1) If I decide to turn on my computer and write a blog, that action seems to be determined by my thoughts. I think I decided to do something and then I did it following through on my thoughts.

2) As I’m writing this blog if I hit the table with my knee and my glass of water starts to fall down, without thinking I try to grab it before it falls. It’s a reflexive action.

3) As I am typing this blog the keys I am hitting are based on my thoughts, but I am not telling my fingers to type. I desire them to type and they seem to act under their own power as the words pop into my mind. The action of my typing these words is a combination of thought and reflexive

action.

Seemingly my thoughts cause most of my actions. But it can be logically shown that I do not control comprehension of my thoughts:

How do we experience thought? Thoughts appear as either words or dialogues of words in our mind. Seemingly we hear our thoughts. Thoughts seem to be a type of sound without being comprised of sound waves. We hear our thoughts in a different way than how we hear sound waves through our ears.

When we hear sound through our ears the sound had to be created through a vibration that causes a disruption in a medium, such as air or water. Then our ears catch those vibrations. If you hit a piano key the vibration of the piano in the air creates sound waves, which then vibrates our eardrums allowing us to hear the sound.

What causes the sound of our thoughts? Are we causing the thought sounds? If so, how? We don’t know. All we know is that thoughts appear in our mind and we hear them and usually believe that we are causing them to appear. But in reality we don’t know the mechanics of how to make thoughts appear.

Can anyone tell me what process occurs which gives me provable control over the thoughts that appear in my mind? We don’t know what or where that process is. Therefore we can’t say we know how to control it. Thoughts appear in our mind and we have no provable idea of how that happens. Why should we believe that we are in control of our thoughts if we don’t know how the actual process of creating and controlling thought occurs?

How do we understand our thoughts? Thoughts flow through our mind in one or more languages. How do we understand languages? How do we know the word meanings and grammar? If I experience the thought: *I’m going to cook rice*—how do I understand what the word rice means? People can say that I went through an experience of learning those words. Now I understand them because I remember what I learned. Sounds reasonable.

But how do I remember? How does the memory of those word meanings become known to me now?

I know from memory of past experience that the word *rice* means the grain of the rice plant. Where is that memory of the meaning of the word *rice* stored and how is it made available to me? However that occurs, I know for certain one thing: I know that I have no control over how my past experiences are stored or made available to me as my memory. The ability to control memory is outside of my control.

For example: If I ask you to explain the plot of a movie you saw – what do you do to find the memory of the movie when you try to recount what you saw? There is nothing that you can do. You don't know where nor how to find a memory. Memory just appears in your mind. You don't search for it because you don't know where nor how to perform a search. However our memory functions, it is obviously not due to our control over it.

What can we conclude?:

1) To understand our thoughts, we need memory in order to understand the language of our thoughts.

2) We don't control memory.

3) We don't know what kind of "sound" thoughts are comprised of, nor how to create or control thought sound. Therefore we don't know how our thoughts appear.

4) Thoughts appear in our mind without our knowing how to create nor control thought, nor what thought even is. Memory enables us to understand the language of our thoughts. We understand the language of our thoughts without controlling nor understanding how our memory functions.

5) If we perform actions based on our thoughts – it can be shown that we do not control our actions because we don't know how to control the creation nor comprehension of our thoughts.

So even if we do not believe shastra when it says that we do not have free will, when we are told that Paramatma controls us by functioning as and controlling our mind, still it can be shown through logical analysis that we do not control our thought process. Therefore we do not have control over our actions or will.

Many gurus tell us that we do have free will. But they are either mistranslated or they are not using the term free will in the normative sense. Or they are mistaken. Often they make the argument:

> We have to have free will. Otherwise how can we have karma? How can we be held accountable for our choices if we have no free will?

Shastra and logical analysis inform us that we do not have free will, i.e. the power to act without the constraints of necessity or fate; the ability to act at one’s own discretion.

We have the innate ability to desire, but not the free will to carry out that desire. Bhakti is about purification of desire by the destruction of avidya (ignorance) and ahankara (deluded sense of self).

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Vedanta, self introspection, and free will.

Part 2: Memory and free will

One type of memory is given to our cognitive awareness in a language in a voice (other types of memory are unconscious, e.g. remembering how to walk or speak). For example: Pay attention to your mind as I ask you a question. Listen to your mind for the answer to the question about a memory of yours that I am going to ask you. Pay attention to your mind as I ask, then listen carefully for the answer in your mind, listen carefully, ready....Where were you born?

What happened in your mind? You 'heard" a voice say the place where you were born. That is a common way to receive a memory. Now, what is required for that sequence of events to occur the way it just happened?

1) You read and understood the question -> 2) your memory system perceived the question -> 3) your memory system understood the question -> 4) your memory system searched for the answer -> 5) your memory system found the answer -> 6) your memory system delivered the answer to you in your mind -- by a voice in your mind speaking it to you in a human language -> 7) you "heard" that voice in your mind -> 8) you understood what that voice said.

Let's go through each step of the process and see if a neuron or any other cell can do what actually transpired.

1) You read and understood the question

How did you understand the question? At some point in your past you learned the English language, now you have memory available to you which gives you the ability to comprehend the English language to some degree or another. What is the actual biological mechanics involved in the process of the question being seen by your cognitive awareness, then understood by the memory of English comprehension, enabling you to comprehend that question? No one knows exactly how that occurs.

2) Your memory system perceived the question

I asked the question in the English language. However the memory system functions, it needed to be able to perceive the question I asked you. Do cells in your brain have the ability to perceive these words? Your perceptual awareness perceives these words because you are conscious. Are cells conscious? How do cells perceive anything?

Cells are unconscious automatons; they are mechanical. They cannot consciously perceive anything because conscious perceptual awareness is only a property of self-aware consciousness. Cells perceive things through chemical or electrical activity. But the cells themselves do not perceive anything because they are unconscious; they display an illusion of perception in the same way that your computer displays an illusion of perception.

In both cases there is no actual perceiving going on. Chemical y affects x which then changes it into chemical xy which then causes chemical z to heat up chemical n, etc. There is an illusion of perception between the chemicals because they are reacting to each other, but those are mechanical chemical reactions, there is no perceptual cognition at any stage in any cell. So, no cell has the ability to perceive anything, yet your memory system was able to perceive the question on this page.

3) Your memory system understood the question

The only way for a conscious entity to comprehend what it perceives is through education/experience, which leads to intelligence, which is based on memory of education/experience. Cells do not have self awareness or

consciousness, therefore no perceptual awareness, therefore no education/experience is possible, and therefore no creation of intelligence based on memory of education/experience. If cells cannot comprehend anything - how did they comprehend the question I asked?

4) Your memory system searched for the answer

In order for some process to search for something, whatever is doing the searching needs to have the ability to search. Cells communicate with each other by chemical or electrical reaction. But, it's not communication between sentient intelligent entities. It's communication by reaction, e.g. chemical x touches and changes chemical y causing it to change into chemical xy which changes it's property and causes it to bond with chemical n, etc.

That is how cells "communicate". Can that process search for memory information? Can mechanical machines which function based on chemical and electrical reaction make an intelligent search in a split second based on a question you just read or heard? What would they need?

They would need knowledge and comprehension of the information they are looking for, they would need knowledge and comprehension of where that information is, they would need knowledge and comprehension on how to access that information. What would cells need to have the ability to do those things?

They would need a very complex communication system, with a database of information that could be easily and quickly accessed and understood and used. Basically, cells would need the ability of a computer. But, cells do not have that ability. They do not have the abilities of a computer to work with and search a database of information.

Even if they did, still they would be unable to use it anymore than a computer can do anything without a conscious endeavor by a person using a computer. Cells are mechanical machines, they do not possess initiative, they function based on reaction to physical stimuli, not intellectual awareness.

5) Your memory system found the answer

Whatever memory system process found the answer to my question, it needed to have a memory system of it's own to recognize the information it was looking for. If a cell was looking for the information of where you were born, it would need to know that the data it finds is the correct answer. How would it know unless it has information at its use that enables it to distinguish one piece of data from another?

In order for your memory system to find the answer to my question, it would need to comprehend that the question being asked is associated with a specific data set. What would it need to do that? Since my question was in the English language and the answer you received from your memory was in a human language, at the least your memory system would need to comprehend and search in English and human language.

What would it need for that? A database of English word meanings, grammar comprehension, rules of linguistics, and the ability to perceive and utilize these things like a computer with voice based recognition. Which cells have those abilities? It's like expecting your bicycle to start talking to you.

6) Your memory system delivered the answer to you in your mind in by a voice in your mind speaking it to you in a human language

What would be needed for that to occur? After finding the correct answer your memory system delivered it to your cognitive awareness in a human language through a dialogue in your mind. When I asked you where you were born, in your mind you heard the name of that place. In order for that to happen your memory system needs to be able to transport the information it found from it's storage place to your mind in a voice or dialogue in human language.

If cells were doing that, they needed to store that data somewhere in the first place before they could access it. They needed to transform intellectual information, thought information, into physical bits of data to store it, then they needed to transform that physical data back into

thought, and then present it to your cognitive awareness as a voice speaking to you in your mind. That is an extremely complex and sophisticated process which cells simply are not capable of doing. Cells cannot speak to you.

7) You "heard" that voice in your mind

The memory of where you were born appeared in your mind in human language through a voice in your cognitive awareness of your mind. That is typically how conscious memories appear in our mind. You desire a memory and it appears in your mind as a voice speaking that memory. One time someone said to me this:

> Well I don't know about others, but when I remembered what I had for dinner 3 nights ago, it didn't just come to me, I had to go through a series of steps... So counting back 3 nights... Monday night! What do I do on Mondays? Yoga...no, didn't go because I went to a friend's for dinner, and Ta Da! I knew what I had for dinner...and by the way sometimes when I wake I do have to go through a conscious process of remembering what day it is! Memory retrieval occurs through the 'button' of either the five senses or as in my case... A logical step by step process of association. It damn well feels like hard work sometimes

I said: You missed the point. How did any of those memories appear in your mind? They just did without you looking in a database of memories.

We don't control how our memory appears in our mind, but because people usually identify the voice in our mind giving our cognitive awareness memory, as themselves or under their control, therefore mistakenly they think they are in control of how memory appears in our mind. But in reality conscious memory data is not within our control, it simply appears in our mind without any actual conscious data search by ourselves because we don't know where nor how to find it. Yet it appears as a voice in our head and that causes people to think they are somehow in control over memory.

That voice in our mind, this voice you hear as you read these words, is a device used by whatever process controls our memory system to inform our cognitive awareness or consciousness with memory information data in the form of language. How do we hear this inner voice in our mind?

8) You understood what that voice said

How do we comprehend what it is saying to us, what is the actual process of hearing and understanding what we hear in our mind? Can cells be the cause? Are cells, with their simple unconscious chemical reaction based system, capable of causing and managing the complexity of thought, intellect, mind, etc?

That would be like expecting a television to put on a show by itself. The hardware of a television is needed to see the T.V. show, but by itself it is incapable of doing everything else. If you damage the T.V. you can't see the show very well or maybe not at all. But the show isn't coming from the T.V. The T.V. is receiving the show being broadcast from something very different than a T.V., e.g. a studio with actors, a sports stadium, etc. In the same way the cells in our brains are not capable of managing our memory system, but our brains are needed for our memory to be understood because it is an interface with our cognitive awareness.

We need our brain to function properly in our body for our cognition to function properly and be able to be consciously and intelligently aware of memory. But our memory system cannot be caused or managed by our cells, our memory system deals with thought, which is non-physical, our brain cells deal with physical chemicals. Cells are not equipped to deal with memory; they cannot perceive thought, communicate with thought, etc. Yet, our memory functions nevertheless

9) What about recent science which implants memories into mice?

They didn't create the original memory, nor did they show how that memory was able to be stored or perceived by the mice. They activated the same part of the brain that was activated when the mouse felt shocked (and developed a memory of that), they didn't create a new

memory, they made the mouse remember a memory it already had by fooling it into thinking it would be shocked when placed into a certain box.

While interesting, all that shows is that there is an interaction between how memory is accessed and the brain, much like how there is a relationship between a hard drive and the data flowing into it from an outside source. The real question is how the memory is stored and made available in an intelligible way to the consciousness without conscious management.

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Vedic sources and past acharyas on women’s rights in Vedic culture

Here are two scholarly research papers, one just released by two ISKCON devotees, which seek to answer: What exactly is said in the shastras (scriptures) and by past acharyas (important gurus) about the restrictions mentioned by Prabhupada and his followers on women? As you may know, they often complain that if you don’t accept a patriarchal sexist social contract as divinely ordained, then you’re an agent of maya (delusion) or even a “demon.” Prabhupada would often quote from some scripture, past guru, or famous pandit, to support his sexism—although many times he would misquote and mistranslate—most famously his translation of Bhagavad Gita 9.32. I’ve shown how most every other commentator and translator, both acharyas and Sanskritists, have disagreed with Prabhupada’s insistence that Krishna says women and sudras are papa-yoni (low-class birth). His more sexist followers often don’t provide any or maybe very little of substance other than quoting Prabhupada to back up their claims of a divinely ordained sexism. You can often see them make claims like so:

> **Srila Prabhupada offered qualified women, like qualified men, services commensurate with their abilities, and part of these women’s qualifications was that they were protected, dependent, faithful and chaste.**

Not just “part”, but all. Why does Visakha dd prefer

> only “parts”, rather than accepting the complete package, as it is? Sastra says that a woman is supposed to be fully dependent on men, not partially. Her statement is a rejection of sastra.

That’s from a current series of old articles written by some GHQ member that’s currently being serialized in The Sampradaya Sun. The person who wrote it constantly refers to shastra, but never quotes it.

This first research paper brought to my attention by bhavaprema, is broader in scope than the second, it’s more about Vedic society in general. The second is mostly limited to a few topics concerning current Gaudiya Vaishnava teachings about a “woman’s role in life,” specifically what is written in ancient sources about women acting as gurus or swamis, etc.

Predicament of Women in Ancient India by Klaus Bruhn.

Here is another source from the author's website Klaus Bruhn.PDF

Some Evidence Regarding Education and Guruship for Vaishnavis, by Bhaktarupa das and Madhavananda das